

THE PAWNS of FATE



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The PAWNS *of* FATE

By
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THE PAWNS OF FATE

*“Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib’d their present state.”*

—POPE.

THE PAWNS OF FATE

CHAPTER I

A CHANCE MEETING

A bareheaded, wildly-excited young man raced across the Bedford Boulevard, in front of speeding automobiles, defying death almost, in his zigzag course from one side of the avenue to the other. Behind him, on the sidewalk, were two stalwart, blue-coated officers, puffing and blowing like wind-broken horses, from the violent exercise of chasing this pickpocket a city block in their determined effort to make a record for themselves by catching the young thief.

For just an instant the chase was interrupted by the line of automobiles passing down the city's great artery of trade; when the men had dashed through the congestion in safety, their prey had eluded them; disgusted, tired, hot and uncomfortable they retraced their steps to their regular beats.

Still fearful of pursuit and unconscious of the fact that the policemen had given up the chase the young man sped on breathlessly for a square or two, then he turned up a side street,—gradually slowing his pace till he came to a walk; now and then he quickly cast glances behind to make sure justice would not overtake him. As he looked for some haven of safety he read a big, faded sign, printed in brick red letters,

"SALVATION ARMY." He then said to himself, "I'll just beat it in there for a while and be safe, for the bulls won't look for a guy in there; and if they do, I've got a good alibi."

The hall was narrow, but it was about sixty feet long; it was dusty and dingy. The walls were covered by a cheap, flowered paper, and here and there were hung religious mottoes. Wonderingly, the young man read,—“SALVATION IS FREE” and “RETURN TO THE LORD.” In the rear of the room was a little platform, raised about eight inches from the floor; on this stood a small sagging table bearing a cracked pitcher and a dusty Bible. A central aisle separated rows of dusty and scarred chairs.

This was the citadel of the “Army of the Lord” where salvation was promised to all, even to that great submerged tenth of human derelicts who have made a shipwreck of life; but our fugitive gave no thought to this building or to its purpose. All that concerned him was his temporary safety, and this room afforded it.

Casting a shifting eye about, to make certain that he was not watched, he drew from his pocket an elegant, silver chatelaine purse, the outside of which he examined very carefully by turning it over slowly in his hand. This examination proved very satisfactory. Possessing the keenest desire to open it at once, to discover its contents, he still uneasily turned round and cast furtive glances at the windows and the door, fearing he might be observed. Reassuring himself, he opened the pocket book and found that it contained five silver dollars, a small chamois

skin, a mirror and calling cards bearing the name and address of a young woman whose home was on the aristocratic Irvington Drive. He quickly emptied the purse, placed the money in his pocket and tore up the cards, save one, saying to himself: "I'll just keep this one for good luck. A feller can't never tell what's goin' to happen!"

He threw the mirror, chamois skin and torn cards into the rusty red stove which was employed in heating the room. How to dispose of the purse was now the question that arose in his mind; had it been worthless he would have dropped it while running. He recalled to memory a certain pawnshop on the west side, kept by a little hunchback, swarthy-skinned, Russian Jew, who was very considerate of his customers' feelings; — he never asked questions.

While he was debating whether or not he should promptly go to this "fence," for such this type of pawn-shop keeper is called, he was given a violent start. The dilapidated, old door in the rear of the hall slowly opened, accompanied by harsh, creaking sounds from its old, rusty hinges. Emerging from a dark, squalid room beyond, was a man upon whom the hand of time had heavily weighed. His hair was very gray, almost fading into white; his form was stooped; his face wore a hardened look, and yet there was a merry twinkle in his eye. Wrinkles and deep furrows accentuated the sunken cheeks and high cheek bones; the marks of many vices were evident. The right arm was somewhat bent and twisted and three fingers of the hand were missing. This physical disfigurement was the mute telltale of his last

safe-blowing act eight years before. Through an overcharge of nitroglycerine the safe door had been torn from its hinges and thrown upon him, breaking the arm and contusing the hand. From this injury he recovered very slowly, and the resulting deformity finally led to his arrest and conviction.

To allay the severe pains he suffered at the time of his injury he resorted to the use of morphine, to which habit he had become a slave. The insatiable cravings for the juice of the poppy weakened his nerves, robbed him of his ambition and made him a total wreck, unworthy of trust, to be ostracised by his former confederates in crime.

Thus he had been compelled to seek light employment wherever he could. Simulating reformation, he had wheedled himself into the good graces of the Major of the Salvation Army and became the janitor of their hall.

His coat, a faded, greenish black, bore evidence of an aristocratic, if departed glory. His pants were bagged at the knees and frayed; a threadbare fringe was apparent at the bottom which skirted the tops of his rough, heavy, ill-fitting shoes.

The young man picked up the chair which he had stumbled against and upset in his sudden fright, adjusted his coat, took a cap from his hip pocket and tried to assume an air of calmness as he turned to face the disturber of his guilty safety.

"What do you want in here, young feller, this time o' day? You oughter know gospel is only dished out here at the preachin' time in the evenin'."

Being addressed in this manner the culprit re-

gained some of his self-possession and hesitatingly inquired about the address of a fictitious personage. Before answering the youth, the old man inspected him from head to foot. He noticed that the chap was dressed in tawdry, flashy clothing of the latest cut, and on his red necktie there glistened an immense imitation diamond. His whole appearance suggested a caricature of gentility. The examiner's eyes did not fail to discover the silver chain dangling from the pocket into which the thief had hurriedly thrust the purse. Eyeing this bit of incriminating evidence the old man inquired, "What you got there in your pocket?"

"Nothin' at all," was the rejoinder.

"Yes, you have. Come clean, you young rascal. What are you doin' packin' around young ladies' silverware?"

This remark so upset the intruder that he was hardly able to answer his inquisitor. In his fear and excitement he blurted out, "You'se ain't goin' to squeal on me, air ye? I had a bit of bad luck last night and lost all I had in a game, and jess had to do somethin' to get a little "cush" from somewhere. You look like a good pal to me, so I'll tell you the truth about it. I swiped it from a swell-looking young skirt jess as she was climin' on a street car. From the looks of her glad rags she'll never miss it. The poor Jane was so skeert and hollered so loud that two bulls who was leanin' agin' a lamp post half asleep got 'roused an' begun chasin' me. I sprints down the Av, gets away from them and then I cuts up a side street till I see this here joint; an' I beats it in. That's the

whole truth. You'se ain't a goin' to turn me up now fer tellin' ye the truth, air ye? "

Before replying the old man carefully closed the door leading to the street, and the one from which he had emerged also; this from precaution and from force of habit. Then nervously brushing about with his old, worn-out feather duster, he approached his visitor and in low tones asked: "What's your name, kid?" "Jere Patton," was the answer. "Well, Jere, I am the janitor of this here salvation retreat. Did you ever hear of Toledo Red? I'm the guy; jess out of the stir in Joliet where I did a bit of seven years straight. I'm through wid de game though; I'm all broke up an' it takes a husky man now-a-days to blow a jug. Major Jones gave me a job dustin' an' takin' care of dis dump; an', as I ain't much good for anythin' else, for I'm a dead one, I think I struck a cinch. Fer three meals a day, a good bed to bunk in an' a shower bath ain't bad fer a feller what's all in, down and out." Winking his eye, he added whispering, "I'm reformed, you know, me lad; ha, ha! Say, Jere, I'm jess a little shy o' change and if you will split de pot wid me we'll step around through the back alley to Dinty's place, a good, quiet booze joint, and have a drink. It's a big schooner ye gits there for a jitney, an' plenty of free lunch to grab on the side."

Jere began to breathe easier after this display of confidence and friendship. He knew that this once famous member of the underground fraternity had been one of the best cracksmen in the country, and had robbed more banks between Toledo and Kansas

City than any other yeggman. He had been a source of worry and constant vigilance to the police and the detectives. Jere had read in the papers glowing accounts of daring feats of robbery performed by the fellow. He was no common thief; but belonged to the aristocracy of crookdom.

Of course Jere did not relish the suggestion to divide equally, but a feeling of patronizing sympathy, the thought of safety and the goodfellowship of the old crook prompted him to accept the proposal, and he replied: "All right, Red; but the dame didn't have as much coin in this here bank of hern as I hoped she would. Only five plunks and some cards an' things to make herself purty with. Come on; I'm sorter dry meself after the run I've had. I'll get some change an' give you half, but fer God's sake let's get out easy so's no one will see us." Thus they departed for Dinty's.

Dinty's place was located in a narrow alley in the wholesale district. It was obscure and out of the way among the shadows of the gigantic buildings in this part of the city. Indeed, its presence would never be suspected by the ordinary citizen passing through this section. Except to a very few, it was practically unknown save to the denizens of the underworld, who knew it well as the rendezvous of the criminal fraternity of the city. Its exterior was uninviting, rough, without paint, and stained by the accumulation of dust and dirt from the narrow alley. The customary signs of the ordinary saloon were absent; and if one set out deliberately to find the place, except he be guided by definite description,

the task would be akin to that of looking for the traditional needle in a hay-stack. The windows were shaded by heavy, green curtains, the worse for wear, but they served their purpose nevertheless, for they kept out the gaze of such honest persons as chanced to pass by. The interior was dimly lighted by a single electric lamp which hung over the mahogany bar which was worn by constant scrubbing, and which bore the imprints of the many schooners that had traveled across its surface. A musty odor met the nostrils as one came in from the outside air. The place was seldom visited by the police, and then usually by some knowing and unreliable member of the Order of Hermandad who graciously received the cigars that were offered with an understanding smile; and who, when no one was about, would take a little social drink.

The bartender was of strong Celtic type. His jaw was square, denoting the tenacity of a bulldog. He was red-headed; and from beneath the bushy eyebrows gleamed his deep-set, hazel-blue eyes which ever cast glances about, taking in a world of detail concerning his surroundings, but never mirroring a single thought. He was, as a rule, noncommunicative; — speaking but seldom, and then in a laconic way.

When the two newly-made friends, Jere and Toledo Red, arrived at the saloon they sat down at a table in the rear; they motioned to the waiter, which worthy wiped the moist top of the table with the end of his apron and took their order for "Two steins o' suds." In a few minutes this order was re-

peated; and, under the exhilarating influence of the hop infusions they grew loquacious and friendly. Jere related that he was practically a child of the gutter; that his mother had died with the "bleedin' o' the lungs" when he was only eight years old, and that the last he heard of his father was that he had been sent to a home for drunkards. Of his parents' antecedents he knew absolutely nothing. From the date of his mother's death he had shifted for himself and gained, as best he could, his limited knowledge, in the school of the streets. Vices of all kinds, both gilded and unmasked, had passed before him in endless procession throughout the period of his adolescence until the present time; daily and intimate contact with moral corruption had left its imprint on his youthful mind. The scars of bitter experience and of general unfairness of the world had seared deeply into his soul, leaving him cynical and morose.

Glad indeed was the listening, decrepit old veteran in criminality to find in his new-found companion and friend, a spirit of antagonism to the law,—a nucleus of anti-social proclivities. He saw in this spirit of social rebellion an opportunity to satisfy his evergnawing desire for revenge upon society for the wrongs, imagined and real, which it had inflicted upon him. As he contemplated this opportunity he resolved at once not to let it slip by; but to gain the young man's complete confidence, and to control him; and thus, if possible, to utilize Jere as a castigating instrument against the public at large.

Before making a bid for Jere's partnership in his cherished schemes he ordered another drink, knowing

only too well that the effect of alcohol would enmesh the unwary youth and lend a rich color to the persuasion of his words. In a paternal manner the old man archly suggested: "Jere, we should be pals and work together in our trades; we've got the game sized up jess about right. If we steals a loaf of bread or a door mat and gets caught it's a thief and a bit for us; but if one of them church deacons swindles a widow woman out of her home in a real estate deal they call him an awful smart business man and run him for alderman at the next 'lection and have us simple guys go out and scare up votes for him."

In a semi-intoxicated manner Jere listened to the overtures of this criminal Nestor, and heartily agreed with him. Whereupon they sealed their compact with one more foamy libation and made their way back to the Salvation Army hall to finish the cleaning and dusting preparatory to the evening services.

CHAPTER II

A NEW DISCLOSURE

After cleaning the hall in a slipshod manner, Toledo Red took from the drawer of the table on the platform a grimy, fly-specked cardboard on which was printed in big black letters this mute, but powerful appeal:

HOT COFFEE AND SANDWICHES SERVED
HERE TONIGHT AFTER THE MEETING.
EVERYBODY WELCOME.

As he placed it in the window he sarcastically muttered to his companion: " 'This'll fetch 'em if nothin' else will."

Then he repaired to a little room in the rear which was equipped with a gasolene stove, a large, black coffee-urn, the silent veteran of many fires; a cupboard of ancient date, filled with heavy mugs; a three-legged table propped up against the wall; a small stool; and, in the corner, a cot bed;—here was the living abode of the janitor.

Here the refreshments of the evening were to be prepared; and, calling Jere to this assistance, the man began to make sandwiches from the material that had been given to the mission by some philanthropic grocer. The bread may have been stale, the ham a little hard, and the coffee of cheap variety; nevertheless the lunch would be dispatched with great

avidity by that portion of the army of the street who desired physical as well as spiritual blessings at the services of the mission.

When the sandwiches were made, they were piled high on a tin platter and covered with a none too clean, damp towel to keep them moist,—or to make them so. After finishing this task the old man looked at his watch.

“Say, kid,” he exclaimed, “the big show’ll begin som’er’ round seven-thirty an’ we’ve jess got time to slip over to Dinty’s an’ get a pint o’ beer an’ snatch some lunch. We’ve got to be back on time or I’ll lose me job. Come on; let’s dig out, and get a move on us.”

They hurried out and in less than twenty minutes they returned to find, when lighting the smoky, smelling coal oil lamps, that several of the faithful worshipers had already arrived. Finishing the task of illuminating the Army Hall, George,—for that was Toledo Red’s name,—turned to Jere and said: “If you never attended one o’ these meetin’s before you’ll see somethin’ if you stick ’round. Sit back there in the corner and keep your mouth shet and your glimmers open. Say nothin’ ’less I punch you. I’ll sit by you till it’s time to make the Java fer this here gang what plays the religious game to git a handout. ’Course I ain’t sayin’ they’s all hypercrites, me boy, but lots o’ them is. Some swell rich folks will, no doubt, blow in this evenin’ to give us a talk. Look at ’em close; it might be well to remember their faces.”

The little hall began to fill with the flotsam and

jetsam of the city's streets. Most of the people were poorly dressed and had rough countenances, which were made more uncouth and repellent by their untidy and wretched clothing. Here and there were scattered a few women,—many of them, perhaps, capable of becoming regenerate Magdalenes but now disfigured by the continued influence of vices. In one corner, with a small baby in her arms, sat a tubercular looking young woman, hectic flushes surmounting her pallid cheeks. For her the religious service held a real charm and benefit; giving her, no doubt, a ray of hope in her otherwise cheerless life. Then, too, the after service luncheon was indeed most acceptable.

Promptly at seven-thirty, to the beating of drums and the swinging of tambourines, the little army band of the barracks came into the hall followed by a number of people whom they had attracted at a near-by street corner. In their wake came two young fellows, smartly but gaudily dressed. "Jiminy! Kid," George whispered, "Pike off those two dips comin' in here; there's no leathers in this bunch worth goin' to jail fer. I wonder what they's doin' 'round here?"

Before Jere had a chance to reply there came the sound of the brakes on a limousine in front of the door, and there came in two women past middle-age, and a third young woman who was about twenty-five years old. They were escorted to the platform by the genial Major,—a typical Salvation Army officer.

The two matrons felt ill at ease and uncomfortable

under the multitude of surreptitious glances that were cast upon them by the motley crowd. They seemed thankful to be safely removed from a personal contact with the audience. Gingerly they took their chairs, which, as a matter of precaution, they first inspected very closely.

"Just as I told Jennie before we started;—this is what we'd find," Mrs. Gerard remarked to her companion; "but the child would come; and I suppose we'll have to go through this ordeal once any way."

"But, mother," the young woman interrupted, "these people are good at heart even if they do belong to the despised of the world. Did not Christ meet and associate with the publicans and sinners?"

"Yes, yes, my dear; but times have changed since then; and don't forget the Scriptures likewise say for us not to cast pearls before swine."

While this conversation took place George noticed that Jere appeared to be very much agitated from some cause or other, and asked: "What's eatin' ye, Kid? Did youse never see any swell Janes before? They's the real stuff,—not common trash."

"Whereupon Jere replied, "I believe I'll step out for awhile and have a few whiffs at a coffin nail; I'm some nervous."

"Sit right tight where you are, you young fool; this ain't no time to be goin'; the meetin' 'll begin soon; besides everybody will guy you if you vamoose now."

"Yes, I know that's so; but I want to go," Jere stammered.

"Nothin' doin'; you can't go; you're goin' to stay

right here; and you'd better, too;" he added with a knowing look.

This retort silenced all objections. The Major arose, and called out the title of the song for the opening of the meeting, stating that after the singing of "Rescue the Perishing," Miss Jennie Gerard would address the audience. He then requested the assembly to bow their heads in prayer while he invoked the divine blessing in a short and stormy supplication.

An anaemic wisp of a girl accompanied the singing of the song on a squeaky, asthmatic organ. Miss Gerard was then introduced by the Major in flowery words, full of mixed metaphors and similes he repeatedly referred to her as the "Patron Angel of the Mission," and the "Mainspring of Its Existence."

The young lady, with but little embarrassment, briefly acknowledged her introduction and began to speak in a distinct manner, giving at once ample proof of her refinement and culture.

Miss Gerard was of medium stature and a brunette of marked type; her features were regular and of Grecian mold; she had a slender, girlish figure, and was dressed unostentatiously in a gray tailored suit.

Her physical beauty, combined with the beauty of character, exerted a mesmeric influence,—an unconscious power on her part,—to hold the audience. She was a graduate of the University of X. While there she became interested in practical sociology. According to her mother's opinion she had too many radical ideas concerning the submerged tenth. Jen-

nie was filled with a burning desire to really do something for the down-trodden; so she had become, while still a student, a college settlement worker.

Her studies had taught her that the serious struggle between capital and labor has a disastrous effect on the poor; that their strength is undermined and devitalized by the fierce struggle for existence. The sweatshops systems which employ women and children and pay hardly sufficient wage to buy food and clothing were, to her, one of the many examples of our faulty industrial systems. She believed that many of the children of the extremely poor are born into the world defective in mind and body and are received into the environments of poverty to be surrounded by ignorance and crime. Even the benign influences of proper food and clothing are denied them. Their opportunities for mental and moral education are destroyed in their struggles against the fierce greed of commercialism. These facts were so indelibly impressed upon her conscience that she was determined to ameliorate, as far as she could, these conditions which produce social asphyxia. She was not possessed of Pharisaical, hypocritical pretenses, the characteristic of a few social workers and reformers.

Miss Gerard's extreme interest in the poor almost distracted her fashionable mother who was entirely out of sympathy with the daughter's ideas. Mrs. Gerard was a devout communicant of St. Paul's Cathedral and rarely failed to attend divine services. The beautiful church, its grand altars, the vested choir, the solemn ritual, the precision and order of

of the entire service made a powerful appeal to her esthetic temperament. The sordid and low conditions of life, induced by poverty, did not in the least arouse sympathy within her.

Jennie Gerard's words were of real hope and encouragement; and, though she made no attempt at a sermon, she admonished her hearers in a gentle and persuasive way to strive to rise above the impeding and hope-destroying circumstances of their lives. She deplored the fact that a great many of the lower strata of society were handicapped from their birth and early childhood by adverse environments and oppressive economic conditions.

In connection with these remarks she related the incident of the robbery which Jere had committed that afternoon. In reciting the episode she stated that she was really sorry for the young man, as she was sure he did not belong to the so-called criminal class. He was, no doubt, a misguided youth whom fate and misfortune had robbed of a proper home and a good training. The loss of the purse and its contents was not a source of regret to her so much as the fact that, by his successful theft, the youthful thief might be tempted to keep on his downward road of crime and eventually come to a bitter end. She added that she would actually be glad if she could find the culprit;—not from a spirit of retaliation or even to regain her loss; but that she might talk to him, and, if possible, convince him of the danger of the path he had begun to pursue.

During the recital of the story of the theft Jere was extremely uncomfortable; his cheeks were al-

most guilty of a blush of shame as he thought of the purse-snatching,—the low, sordid, mean act he had committed, and the extreme fright and shock which he had given this kind-hearted social missionary of the city's slums. His regrets, however real, were not greater than his fears that she might recognize him. The vision of the jail yawning for its prey passed before him; he saw the wheels of justice grinding swiftly and pictured himself a convicted thief paying the penalty for his crime. He shuddered so perceptibly that his companion noticed him and asked: "What's the matter wid ye? Got the ager? The hot coffee which I'll dish out shortly will warm ye up, pal."

It seemed to Jere that while Miss Gerard was speaking she was continuously looking at him and through him; and that she read his guilty conscience. He was glad indeed when she had finished.

After a few commendatory remarks upon the able address the Major invited those so inclined to give their testimony as to their various reformatations which had been effected by the work of the Mission. After two or three minutes of painful silence a shabbily dressed, unkempt, middle-aged man arose. In a thick raucous voice he related how he had been turned to honesty from a life of inebriety and criminality of the most dangerous variety. Several of the crowd cleared their throats and a faint but audible murmur ran through the assembly. As he sat down a fervent "God bless you!" was rewarded him by the Major and his staff.

"Listen to that old hypocrite!" George whispered

to Jere, "he's tryin' to make them society ladies believe he's been a bad man and sure-enough burglar, when he's only a common sneak-thief. His own shadder could chase him down the alley. Our gang would not let him come round them, for he was only a good-fer-nuthin' stool-pigeon. He hangs around here only to git somethin' to eat, and when they quits givin' out this here free lunch he'll be as scarce as a frost in July."

Another "living testimony" to a saving power rose, and in monotone speech recited how he, too, had once trod the path of sin and had been a terror to the law-abiding community. He recounted numerous, notorious robberies ostensibly committed by him, closing his story by saying: "Thank the Lord, I'm on my way to heaven now." His efforts were acknowledged by several "Amens" from the members of the army, and one of them in a shrill, strained voice, began to sing, "Just as I am without one plea."

George again nudged Jere and said, "If this don't beat all; that gink never swiped anything more than a jitney bag of peanuts in his life, and then gits up and palms hisself off as a fust-class peterman. I am goin' to go an' get the eats ready. Now don't blow away while I'm gone; you'll stay here with me tonight; I'll fix it up all right wid de big boss."

A sickly, faded and jaded looking female, a former habitu  of the red light district, arose and in semi-audible, staccato speech asserted: "I was saved in this very mission hall seven months, seven days and seventeen hours ago, and am glad to testify that I am still standing on the rock of salvation."

After a few words the Major closed the meeting, inviting all to stay for the free lunch. Of course, the distinguished guests of the evening departed at once, the Major gallantly escorting them to their waiting machine. When all the remaining souls, or rather, hungry stomachs had been fed they, one by one, passed out into the night—Whither?

George took the Major aside and stated that he had seen Jere pass early in the evening, and that he had noticed the worn and worried look on the boy's face. "I found that he was on his uppers with no place to flop and nuthin' to eat; so I invited him in here, knowin' you wouldn't care, Major, for it might be the savin' of the poor lad's soul," he shrewdly added, fully realizing the value of this bit of moral bait. In truth, the Major was delighted with this display of the man's humanity to man, coming from one who himself had once been a menace to the peace of society. Jere was heartily welcomed by the Major and bidden to make himself fully at home; he added that perhaps in the next few days some suitable employment could be found. With a friendly "Good night" the Major departed. No sooner had the last echoes of his retreating footsteps died away than George threw off his holiness mask, and taking off his coat also, asked Jere: "Have you got the makin's, Kid? I'm actually hungry for an inhale or two meself. Say, what made you want to go out and take a smoke so bad when the meetin' started? You acted queer all evenin'; come, clean. You know I'm square; may be I can steer you right if you are on the wrong track."

Jere tossed his host a small pouch of tobacco and fumbled in his pockets for some cigarette papers.

"Well, Red, le'me tell ye, I've had a close shave tonight."

"Gee! you doan mean gittin' religion, does you?" George interrupted, squinting at him from underneath his bushy, gray eye-brows.

"Naw! go 'long! I doan mean that at all. Ain't you next? I'm the guy what robbed that young Jane what spoke tonight and told all about me 'moll-buzzin'' her. Every time she put her lamps on me I thought the stuff was off, bo. What if she really had tumbled that it was me? Wonder if that nice talk, jess wantin' to save my soul would have held true, or would the old mother-hen that was with her have yelled fer a copper. Lord! I'm glad they're gone. Gimme a cup of that black drip to warm up; I'm really chilled all over."

"Well, I'll be damned," George ejaculated. "If that ain't the limit, me name ain't Toledo Red what's known from the old burg Toledo on the Maumee to Kansas City as the best soup handler that ever cracked a jug; an' that ain't no brags either, only I don't gets up in prayer-meetin's to tell folks about it. Well, Kid, put 'er here," he said, extending his maimed hand; "'The Devil is good to his own,' they says, an' I b'lieve there's some truth in it. But, look here, don't let your jaw drop on the floor now; the fire's out. She didn't pike you off, an' she can afford to lose that bit o' change. They's more where that come from. Don't I know her dad well? Well, I reckon; he's the boss of the 13th ward, an' a

hell-cat of a gink he is. Big church member on Sundays, an' durin' the week,—O Lord! We is angels compared to him. He owns the leaky shanty next door an' several dumps in the tenderloin district. He never looks where the money comes from. All he wants is for it to come, the more the merrier, an' he don't give a dang how it was got either.

“I'm really sorry fer the gal,” he added, after a moment of thought, “for she's got a good heart and would be a good sort if she belonged to our class; but she is the victim of the wrong system. Want another cup of Java? No? Well, Kid, you jess can thank your lucky stars that you blowed in here today; it's goin' to be the makin' of ye; mind what I says. If any one can put you hip to the world and its funny ways, old George kin, you betcher life. You's ain't sleepy, air ye? Well, let me tell you a bit of me life an' you'll see that you've run up agin the right party to put you wise, me boy, to some money-gettin' stunts.”

CHAPTER III

PRECEPTOR AND PUPIL IN CRIME

The campaign between the reform and wet element of the city was sizzling hot and the heat of the contest waxed even hotter as the election day approached. As a consummating blow to the liberal party a new revelation of graft and wickedness in high places again stirred the city and the daily papers aired the latest sensational scandal of police corruption. In flaring headlines there was printed:

ANOTHER THIEF UNMASKED!
GUNMEN CHARGED FOR PROTECTION TO
WORK THEIR NEFARIOUS CRIMES ON
THE LONG SUFFERING PUBLIC!

Again the police department came into the public limelight. A long trusted member of the city's detective force, Patrick Ryan, had been killed in the tenderloin district. The circumstances attending the crime conclusively proved that the deceased had been a most unprincipled, double-dealing police officer and an ex-convict, whose past record of crimes was sufficient to stamp him as one of the most daring and desperate bank robbers the country had ever known. He was no less than Big Riley, the "peterman" (bank robber), whose name was once familiar to all the police headquarters of the metropolitan cities in the United States and even in some parts of Europe.

It had been his practice, in the jargon of the underworld, "to shake down" the crooks,—meaning to extort a heavy percentage of their profits from thieveries and hold-ups, for protection. Those who dared to refuse him found it urgently necessary to leave the city or find themselves in the toils of the law.

While under the influence of liquor, Ryan demanded of a former "pal," a bank robber, an unusually large tribute. The old companion and accomplice refused to pay the money and thereupon followed a physical struggle, resulting in the death of the officer. The sympathy of the criminal fraternity was with the slayer, since he had been used unfairly by his one-time confederate.

Editorials of a sarcastic nature concerning this episode were printed in the daily papers. The graft of the police officials was denounced in bitter terms in the homes, the clubs and churches. A new impetus was given to the better citizens to strive the harder to eliminate the wickedness that threatened their fair city. Likewise the startling disclosure received its full discussion and attention by the pariahs and human wolves of the city.

That Friday evening, while George and Jere were partaking of the liquid cheer and lunch at Dinty's club, Fred Sanderson, some time called "Lone Wolf," came in. This title was given him by the followers of Ali Baba for the reason that he always worked alone and never mingled with the pack in his treasure-seeking escapades. As he advanced toward the table at which the pair was seated, he intently eyed Jere from head to foot with a cold, steely stare, under

which our youthful thief squirmed uneasily. George drew a neighboring chair to their table and invited Sanderson to join them. He then introduced Jere.

"Here's a new pal; he's on the square and wants to learn the game. He's pulled off enough stunts in the last two weeks to prove that he's all right and can be fully trusted."

Jere's face beamed with joy under this profuse praise and compliment and he inwardly swelled with pride that he should become the acquaintance of such an luminary of the criminal world. While Sanderson trusted George, a friend to whom he owed his life and an eternal debt of gratitude, his suspicions were still not fully allayed, for he was the least bit fearful that the young man might be a "mouthpiece" for the detective force. But since he had little to say that might be of incriminating nature or of any service to a stool pigeon to transmit farther, Sanderson freely spoke his mind.

In turn, Sanderson was the object of superficial inspection by Jere, who failed to perceive the intimate characteristics of this prince of thieves. He was a tall, close-knit, well-muscled individual. His jet black hair,—slightly curled, was here and there sprinkled with streaks of gray which were especially prominent at the temples. His forehead was high; his nose slightly aquiline; his mouth small and well formed; regular teeth were in evidence when his thin bloodless lips were parted in a cynical smile. Then, too, there was a clean cut jaw, indicative of pertinacity and steadfastness of purpose. A careful observer would have noted, as Sanderson approached

the pair at the table, that his carriage was erect, his step elastic and quick, that might well become a military officer. His broad, well-developed shoulders were covered by the snugly fitting coat of his fashionable, tailor-made suit.

As Sanderson toyed with his whiskey glass, for it was this beverage that he occasionally drank, his slender, shapely, carefully manicured hands stood out in marked contrast to those of the other two men. Indeed, he was proud of them, and their beauty did not at all indicate weakness for in a physical encounter they could easily be transformed into a vice of steel. Sanderson was a graduate of an Eastern University; he had been surrounded with every advantage and social opportunity from childhood. His crimes could not be charged to an evil heredity or to poverty, but only to a willful prodigality and viciousness. While at the University he was given to gambling, debauchery and only through the earnest efforts of his father, a man prominent in financial circles, was he permitted to finish his college career.

From petty crimes, step by step, he became a professional criminal. He belonged to the elite of the criminal plutocracy; all his depredations were based upon skillfully and subtly laid plans. They were always full of definite purpose. The quick acquisition of wealth was the goal and motive of all his crimes.

His habits were luxurious and extravagant. Frequently he visited grand opera; was a patron of art and literature; and an ardent admirer of Poe.

He keenly enjoyed Molière's Misanthrope; the

writings of cynical and morbid authors were his delight. He wrote satires upon the follies of society; he contributed, under a nom de plume, weird poems and essays to critical and iconoclastic magazines and periodicals, devoted to the non-constructive criticism of the times and people. He could have been styled with propriety a literary Bohemian. Versatility was the prominent attribute of his personality. He found it easily possible to adjust himself to all conditions and classes. He oscillated from the very dregs of society to the company of distinguished members of the metropolitan clubs. His keen, vigorous, criminal mind enabled him to cover his heartless rascalities with a cloak of respectability; whenever he found it profitable, he conformed in a negative manner to the conventions of society, but regarding the marriage law he held the most cynical views; lacking in altruistic qualities he performed acts of apparent charity to the lesser lights of the underworld for the hold it gave him over them.

When a second round of drinks was ordered, Sanderson remarked to George, "I suppose you have become acquainted with the tragedy of last evening. While murder is to be deplored at any time, Detective Ryan received his just deserts. He's not been on the square for some time, he has given us the double cross and his taxes were too heavy for the average 'gun' to pay. I knew sooner or later it was coming to him. I do not wonder that he asked so much for protection since he was able to get it, and was he not upheld by the chief of police himself? I tell you, George, the world's crooked from the top to

the bottom of society. I know, for I have lived at all levels. There are just as many "unmugged" crooks as there are "mugged" ones. The world may know these unphotographed grafters as political bosses; for instance, as a mayor, a chief of police, a warden of a penitentiary, a city contractor, a member of the legislature, a judge in the courts, but we so-called anti-social devils know them as they are, for haven't we bought them at their price when we had the money—and when we didn't have it, they were saints and deaf to our pleas."

To all this George silently acquiesced, nodding his head in assenting approval, while Jere was inspired by this contemptuous attitude toward the foibles of mankind, which he only half understood, and ardently replied:

"I always felt jess like you says, but did not know how to say it."

George quickly telegraphed a look of approbation to Sanderson, as much as to say that the young fellow was of promising proclivities.

"A man may slave and save in this so-called honest pursuit of daily hard work," Sanderson resumed, "but never accumulate a competency."

"You're right, I tried it once," George interjected.

"Yes, after years of hard work nothing is left; life has been barren of pleasure and the little hoard, saved up for a rainy day, dwindles rapidly away under the pressure of poverty or misfortune. I prefer to make my money quickly. There is, of course, a risk involved in our profession and so there is in all

professions and vocations of life. A carpenter may fall from the roof, that's his lookout. We may feel the clink of the iron bracelet about our wrists, if so, our stupidity deserves it. There has been implanted in some of us an impulse to steal, and in the breasts of others there is the desire to capture and imprison us.

"The robbers of the bourse, the thieves of the watered stock, fleece the unwary, and the capitalists think there is law only for the rich and none for the poor. If I forge a check, steal a suit of clothes to ward off the winter's chilly blasts, I am a thief; but if I sell a bit of worthless real estate or valueless security I am become a master of big business. But if our friend Jere holds up a man at the point of a gun and takes away his money, he is locked up in prison as a menace to society. If you steal the accumulation of a lifetime from a laboring man by misrepresentation of facts, they want to make you a deacon in the church, and the banks are ready to lend you money even without a note. Dodge all your taxes, even if you will by barefaced perjury, and a minister will gladly take your tainted coin and bless it at the communion table.

"There are more grafters outside of prison than there are on the inside. A capitalist, by hiring a good corporation lawyer, can sail through the rocks and shoals of financial laws into a calm sea of social aristocracy and big influence. There are enough crimes committed under the name of big business that, if the perpetrators were caught and prosecuted, their number would more than fill the penitentiaries of the

state. Our society breeds its criminals, if they must be called such; it puts the poor in want, and shadows them with a cloud of starvation, and yet the pharisees and hypocrites wonder why there are criminals. I may rob the rich of a few trifles, but they rob the poor vastly more. I steal a diamond from a wealthy man and I am a crook, but society says if I bankrupt him in a slump of stocks I am a genius." Excuse me, boys," Sanderson said, as he paused in his soliloquy, "I was just thinking. It makes my blood boil as I ponder over these things. I guess I am growing pessimistic."

"As far as I could understand those big words, that's a better sermon than the Major could preach. It sounds good to me!" George approvingly answered with a wink.

Sanderson resumed, "What's new in the old town? I've been away for a week on a little private business and only returned yesterday. The exigencies of our profession sometimes make it rather difficult to keep abreast with the times, especially when one is hiding behind a sheltering cloud; circumstances compel us to make retreats occasionally which are more solitary than those of a convent."

George replied, "There is nothing new except, that this here reform gang is makin' such a holler in de papers dat it is hard fer a guy what's on the level to make a decent livin'. It's harder to git protection than it used to be an' these fly cops wants to shake a fellow down before he has had a chance to make any money at all.

"Crippled as I am in me right wing, I'd have a

hard time of it if it weren't for the Major, who gave me a job; then Jere here, has made a few good clean-ups moll-muzzin', an' that keeps us in spendin' money. But the kid's too good a boy to keep workin' at dat game; there ain't enough dough in it for the chances that a feller takes in goin' after it."

Here Jere interrupted, "Gee, I wish I could git in on a big job with you fellers once!"

"Maybe you can sometime, just be patient, there's a lot to learn about this business," Sanderson condescendingly replied.

"By—the—way, Fred," George stated, "I nearly forgot to tell you about the fancy charity ball what's comin' off a week tonight at the house of Banker Stratton on Ashland Boulevard. The money what they makes at that blow out, they're goin' to give to the Major for the remodeling of the mission. He gets all mushy about this business, and knowing that I'm a Christian he up an' gives me all the dope about it, fer he knows I wouldn't tell an' really I ain't, fer the papers done got hold of it already an' have big write-ups 'bout this here sweet charity game. An', believe me, dat's all gaff, fer the folks what goes there gets every bit of fun out o' dat business fer every darn nickel de puts into it."

"Correct you are, old pal, I know all about the affair, though as yet they have not sent me an embossed invitation, but I know they will, they're always so careful not to hurt my feelings," Sanderson ironically responded.

"The big Four Hundred will be there and it is rumored that the famous pearl necklace, valued at

twenty-five thousand dollars will be worn by a Miss Darrell. I saw it at Tiffany's one week after its arrival from Paris. It's a real beauty and a little job like that would be worth any man's while. You may be sure, George, I'll attend."

With this last remark he left his companions somewhat abruptly. He made his home in an exclusive section of the city, maintaining an elegant suite of rooms in an apartment house. This was located in the high rent district, where neighbors fraternized only in evening dress at social gatherings. Thus living in the midst of this highly conservative community, where he was reputed to be a first-class traveling man, seldom at home, it was easy for him to elude the scrutiny of the police department, which would not look for an offender in such quarters. When the sleuths were endeavoring to locate thieves and other law breakers, Sanderson remained quietly in his apartments. After the excitement of police activity had subsided he would emerge serenely from his self-appointed retirement, ready for a new criminal campaign.

After leaving the squalor of Dinty's he quickly walked down the alley and, entering a main thoroughfare, looked about for a public conveyance. Luck favored him, a taxi came into sight and he hailed it. Giving the chauffeur his address he carelessly leaned back on the cushions and lit a cigarette. Shortly he ascended the brown marble steps leading to the Algonquin Apartments and selecting an odd key from an unusually well-filled ring, he let himself quietly into the building. Entering his quarters he pressed

a button and the room became flooded with a mellow light. The lamp that was most conspicuous was shaded by a heavy red lambrequin of gilt-braided damask silk, the pedestal of the lamp representing a nude figure of a Moorish girl swinging a torch.

Beside the massive library table stood a revolving book case, well filled with elegantly leather bound and gilt-edged books. The walls were decorated with beautiful copper plate etchings; in one corner stood a cellarette, made from the finest of Circassian walnut. This piece of art furniture was filled with wines of the 1854 vintage and liquors and cordials of the rarest and most expensive kind.

The exceptionally thick, brocaded curtains, excluding the light from without, gave the room the stamp of rare elegance and exquisite taste. Sander-son stepped into the adjoining room, which was also richly furnished, and made himself comfortable by donning a superb silk-lined smoking jacket and, removing his street shoes, he put on a pair of fine Persian slippers. On returning to the living room he took from the table a heavily engraved silver cigarette case; selecting one of the perfumed cigarettes he slowly puffed wreaths of smoke to the ceiling. He then walked over to one of the pictures on the wall and pressed an invisible button, the location of which he only knew, opened a panel and a small wall safe was disclosed. With deft fingers he manipulated the combination and the miniature vault was open. From its depths he withdrew a necklace made of imitation pearls, so perfectly wrought that the deception was discernible to a connoisseur alone.

He held it up to the light, then let it fall gently upon the sleeve of his purple velvet coat, and finally without a comment he replaced the bauble, effacing all evidence of its existence as well as its hiding place. With a sigh of complete satisfaction he dropped himself into a near-by chair and lighting a fresh cigarette gave himself over to musings and dreams as hazy and indefinite as the blue wreaths of smoke emanating from the smouldering roll of paper between this fingers.

Finally, he murmured to himself, "Well, I'm glad I had that New York jeweler make me an imitation model of that pearl necklace; I knew it would come in handy some time. Here's your chance, old top, to increase your exchequer, and what fun it will be to have everybody stand aghast when the desperate robbery is discovered. Pouring himself out a stiff glass of brandy from a silver mounted decanter on the polished top of the cellarette, he poised the thin glass in mid-air and with one of his sinister smiles he said: "My compliments, Miss Darrell."

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY ELECTION

The telephone on the flat top of the highly polished mahogany desk rang impatiently. Joseph Gerard yawned and cast a glance at the beautiful mission clock which stood in the corner of his office. The hands were pointing to half-past ten. Gerard was tired and sleepy; a dull headache reminded him of the preceding night's political meeting, at which the thirsty throats of the politicians had been liberally cooled by sparkling icy drinks. Vigorously the bell rang again and a husky voice coming over the wire inquired.

"Have you arranged that matter? "

"Not yet."

"If you don't get at it at once, Blake will have to run. We sat up all night and you promised us you would attend to it."

"Give me two hours' time and I'll find you the best attorney in X——, who'll be glad to get on our slate and one who is anxious to rise in the world."

With this last remark to the Mayor of the city, Gerard wearily hung up the telephone receiver and settled back in his heavy, leather-covered chair.

The following half hour was given over to reverie and contemplation. Name after name of possible candidates for the office of city attorney passed through his mind, and to every one there seemed to

be some objection or obstacle. This lawyer was too honest and clean, that one too crooked, the third without talent, a fifth one was lacking in experience and capacity. Gerard had promised the Mayor to find a suitable attorney to complete the slate they were to present to the wide-open element of the town.

The present Mayor was the squarest man who had ever held the office. Not to the public, but to the general mass of crooks and yeggmen. The city of X—— had become a veritable home, a Zoar, for the denizens of the underworld and, unless their crimes were of the most desperate character, the money they paid for protection always guaranteed a liberal bath of immunity and whitewash. The present city attorney was too much of a rascal; by that is meant, he was too clumsy in the performance of his crookedness and was ever a continual source of worry and criticism for the administration. The corruptions of his office were so crude as to invite constant scandalous airings in the city newspapers and clubs.

While he was no worse than the ring that sought to oust him, they saw in his candidacy a possible defeat.

The long, tiresome meeting of the night before had been given up to the discussion of this subject, and just about daybreak it was agreed upon by the politicians of the liberal party that Blake, for that was the city attorney's name, must be retired into oblivion and that a man who would be supple and pliant in the hands of the machine must be found to take his place on the party ticket for the coming election.

The friends of Blake had fought hard against this proposed change, but the wisdom born of political experience finally convinced them of the folly of allowing personal friendship to stand in the way of victory at the polls.

Joseph Gerard, who had the welfare of his party at heart, volunteered to secure a capable young man who would be willing to run for the office;—one whose character was still unblemished, who could lend, if possible, a moral tone to their more or less besmirched ticket. He had promised the Mayor to furnish the name of the desired candidate by ten o'clock the next morning. But the late hours he had kept the night before made slumber sweet and long, and when the appointed time had arrived he had not even begun the search for the young barrister upon whom he was going to thrust this questionable honor.

The musical chimes of the clock striking the hour of eleven startled Gerard from the musings.

He rose from his chair, put on his hat and, reaching for his ebony cane, he strode through the outer door of his office into the hall toward the elevator shaft, not knowing exactly where he was going, but possessed with the single idea to secure the much-needed candidate. He had but one hour in which to keep his promise and he realized that he must act quickly. As the elevator shot past the third floor in its downward flight he caught a brief glance at the name of a young lawyer on the Florentine glass of one of the office windows. The idea flashed in his mind that possibly this man might well serve as a candidate for

the machine organization. He signaled the car to stop at the second floor and by the stairway returned to the floor above. He recalled that he had been introduced to the young barrister at the city's Commercial Club and the first impression of him had been pleasing.

Little did Gerard realize as he read the name, Arthur Kennington, that this person would play a most eventful part in his future career. Had he known it, he would have turned back at once and thus he would have saved himself the ignominy of exposure. Confidently he walked into the reception room, which was meagerly furnished and not filled with waiting clients.

Just as he was taking a seat he was welcomed into the private office by a cheery "Good morning." Kennington advanced to meet him and, as their hands met in cordial clasp, the elder man measured his companion from head to foot, noting the clean cut, cultured appearance, which indicated considerable reserve strength and power. Inwardly Gerard said to himself, "Here is just the man; I will not need to go farther." The young man's attitude suggested decision, firmness and strength, and Gerard did not fail to observe these indications of character. On the other hand, this legal tyro, without experience in the world of politics, might easily fall a victim to deceitful wiles, for would not ambition and the desire for power outweigh the decrees of Kennington's judgments? Upon these human vanities Gerard made his appeal to the young attorney. The idea had no sooner crossed his mind than he resolved

to act upon it, and he began the conversation by saying:

"Mr. Kennington, I have been appointed as a committee of one by our party to lay an important proposition before you, and it must be acted upon at once."

Without betraying his surprise, Kennington asked, "What do you wish of me?"

"I regret that we have not had an opportunity to explain this matter to you heretofore, but I know it will meet with your approval."

"Yes, yes, please state the message you have for me and explanations may follow later."

"Well, since you force me with such deliberate frankness I will come to the crux of the matter at once. The honorable Mayor and his private advisors have decided to place your name as a candidate for city attorney upon our ticket. It is a winning ticket and you cannot afford to let this great opportunity go by, as it opens the door for you to public life, for achievement and success in your chosen profession."

Arthur Kennington was indeed astounded at this proposition. He had dreamed pardonable dreams of political success, of clean statesmanship; but little did he hope in his obscurity and practical poverty, that the avenue to his fondest ambitions should suddenly be opened to him without slow, painful toil. Before he had recovered himself sufficiently to speak, Gerard graciously demanded an answer and patronizingly patted him on the back, remarking: "You're not going to stand in your own light, are you?"

"Just give me a little time to think."

"There's no need for any lengthy deliberation; will you accept the honor that has been offered to you, or will you not?"

As abrupt as this last remark seemed, Gerard had not the slightest idea to withdraw his offer, even though some argument might be necessary to accomplish his mission.

"Indeed, Mr. Gerard, I feel it to be an exceedingly great honor to be asked to submit my name at the coming election; and, before answering you, let me inquire what conditions and stipulations are attached to the acceptance of this unusual and unexpected offer?"

"Why, bless you, none at all, my young man; after hours of careful deliberation we have decided that you are best fitted for the arduous duties of city attorney. This important position requires talent, brain power, LOYALTY, and an ability to distinguish between sentimental gush and practical conceptions concerning the duties of district attorney, and these qualifications we think you possess to a marked degree."

Kennington quickly reviewed the whole situation in his mind and he indeed was puzzled to understand the extremely unique offer that had been made to him. He had been pressed for an immediate answer; it was clear to him that the proposition must be turned down at once, or promptly accepted. Time for deliberation and consideration was out of question.

"Since you have stated that there are no stipulations or binding agreements to be made, I agree to be

a candidate for the office of city attorney," he remarked.

Gerard was so highly elated over the success of his mission that he could hardly wait to communicate the news to the Mayor's office. He had found an aspirant for political honors, and while practically unknown there were no scandals connected with his name. The young lawyer would, no doubt, prove pliant in the hands of the city fathers; and this particular quality of character was held to be a great asset for those who served the public. Taking the young man by the hand, he warmly thanked him for the acceptance of the candidacy. Then, handing his card to Kennington, he said:

"I shall expect to have the pleasure of your company tonight at seven o'clock dinner with my wife and daughter. I know you will not disappoint us." With this remark he promptly stepped out of the office, before Kennington had a chance to reply, leaving the young lawyer dumfounded over the whole proceedings.

The successful termination of Gerard's visit was promptly telephoned to the Mayor's office.

Kennington was a graduate of the Harvard Law School, the son of a good, but now impoverished family, who had lost their wealth in a slump of the stocks in the market. He was thirty-two years of age. He had taken many prizes at Harvard and was first in his class. He had devoted a great deal of study and attention to criminal law, and thoroughly believed in the vigorous prosecution of criminals. To him protection of society came first, and the wel-

fare of the criminal second. He was firmly convinced that punishment, swift and certain, would materially reduce crime and that errors, delays and subterfuges of the law should be eliminated from the court practices. His conception of the penal law demanded that all violators, whether high or low, should serve the penalty for their crimes without fear or favor. Immunity and whitewash were unknown quantities to him.

The campaign that preceded the election was one of the most bitter the city had ever known. Mud-slinging, ranting and ridicule were more often employed in the campaign speeches than were logic, reason and judgment. The grafters, the saloon men, the violators of the liquor law, the bosses of the redlight district and the powers that prey upon the public tax coffers fought a frenzied fight to maintain their ascendancy and control in the administration of the city government. To them defeat at the polls spelled ruin. It meant exposure and possibly imprisonment to many.

For the human vultures who prey on the women of the underworld it presaged an acquaintance with manual toil or a visit to the "rock-pile." The liberal party determined to win at any cost. To them honor and fairness were empty words to be used in prayer-meeting and churches only, but nowhere else.

The reform element indeed had the greatest cause for a vigorous, active campaign: the present city officials were corrupt; the dens of vice flourished; the quicksands of iniquity claimed many of the sons and

daughters of the city's best families. Crime was rampant. Crooks ruled the police courts. Neither life nor pocketbook were safe. The enmity was intense and violently partisan; on several occasions the speakers of the conservative element were threatened with physical violence in anonymous letters.

As Kennington viewed the situation he began to secretly wish that his name might be withdrawn from the ticket. He was actually ashamed to be allied with the corrupt crowd whose company was forced upon him by virtue of his candidacy. But he had "layed his hand on the plow" and he could not turn back; and, since this was the case, he resolved within himself, should he be elected to the office of district attorney, that he would be the master of his own mind and conscience. Strenuous prosecution would be the fate of all evil doers. Whether this resolution led him over rocky paths or not, it mattered little to him. Having once made up his mind he always clung to his decisions with a firmness and tenacity akin to fatalism.

The election day on Tuesday, November — of the year 19—, was a gray, bleak, dismal day. The chilly winds from off the rough, white-capped waters of the Lake pierced one to the marrow. The slight, drizzling mist of the early morning was changed into a cold, sprinkling rain. But the atmospheric conditions did not in the least dampen the ardor of the partisans. The heat of the conflict warmed them. Prejudice and hatred so permeated their beings that the inclemencies of the weather were but matters of little concern.

In the poor districts of the city there were to be found loafing about the polls the men who, on other than election days, eke out a miserable existence in the rear end of saloons doing small errands and menial chores for an uncertain and meager charity of more or less genial bar-keepers.

Today, however, they believed themselves to be powerful factors in the selection of the public servants, and truly they were. But when the die had been cast, election day over, they were seen to sneak back to their retreats, regretting that elections do not come more frequently. To them, selling their votes was an accomplishment; and he indeed was a poor worker for his party who could not receive at least five prices in one day.

This was the day for the sluggers and henchmen of Gerard to intimidate the voters who dared think for themselves. These social scavengers, who feed on the husks of political bribery, were instrumental in starting riots in different parts of the city. Many honest voters were slugged, arrested and placed in the city jails until the voting hour was past, thus crippling the strength of the conservative party. Bitter fights and bloodshed occurred in many districts, and yet the police made no arrests.

Good people clamored at the jails for bondsmen and release. Their appeals were delayed or ignored until the polls were closed, and then angry disgruntled crowds were released from their temporary imprisonment and curtly informed that they were lucky to escape so lightly from the toils of the law for disturbing the peace and order at the polls. Unfairly as

they were treated, they were without redress or justice.

All day long the saloons had been closed,—that is, in front,—while in the rear a stream of purchased voters had gone in and out continuously, refreshing themselves at the expense of the party. In several wards corruption ruled supreme, ballots were mutilated and thrown out, the returns were slow and contested. . . .

The liberal party had won. The next morning a foreboding gloom prevailed over the city, especially among the good citizens, while the underworld revelled in orgies, and wanton hilarity abounded because of their fraudulently achieved victory.

A new era of political depravity had been entered upon. But there was one cog in the newly elected city machinery, in the personality of the prosecuting attorney, Kennington, who was fated to bring about disorder and disaster in the ranks of the victors.

Gerard believed thoroughly in the old adage, "To the victor belongs the spoils." To him victories were empty honors unless the fruits could be enjoyed; and with these ideas in mind he proceeded to the office of the new prosecuting attorney on the first day the latter had assumed the responsibilities of his position. Gerard had carefully laid his plans; he decided he might as well break the ice in the beginning of the administration as later. Kennington must be made to understand the debt of gratitude he owed the Mayor and his cohorts. They had been schooled in politics and in the affairs of the city government. This young novice must be taught to

tread the paths that were marked out for him. The lesson was to be given as gently as possible, but knowledge necessarily had to be imparted. With a cordial, "Good morning!" Gerard walked into Kennington's office, where he found the young man pouring over some legal-looking documents.

"Not on the job already?"

"Good morning, Mr. Gerard, be seated; I am glad to see you," Kennington replied.

"My boy, don't start in the work so vigorously; you'll find enough to do before you get through, without looking for it."

"Yes, but at least I will enjoy some respite from my duties while you are here," the young attorney pleasantly rejoined.

"I have just a little information to impart to you and I know you'll not consider me impertinent for doing so. The affairs of this office have always moved along smoothly and quietly and I am satisfied it is your purpose to follow in the steps of your predecessor. Tommyrot nonsense and sentimentality were not in his makeup. His shrewd mind let him rely upon that sensible old motto, "The easiest way is the best."

Kennington reddened very perceptibly at these last remarks, and the elder man was not slow to notice this evidence of emotional disturbance, and in a conciliatory tone he continued:

"You may be depended upon to do your duties as you see them. But I know that you will not resent the kindly advice which I came to give you in a fatherly way."

Kennington's jaw closed tightly and he turned directly to the boss of the thirteenth ward and quietly but firmly said: "I'll be pleased to hear what you have to say, Mr. Gerard."

The young man's attitude told Gerard that he must proceed cautiously.

"You know very well by the court docket that those fanatical reformers have had the presumption to have Benson arrested on some petty-fogging charge about the election deal. Now let me tell you he was the most liberal contributor to our campaign fund, and he worked like a Trojan to put our ticket across; and, if it does appear like flattery, I might add that he is extremely interested in you and your future. These prayer-meeting dubs and suffragette ladies' clubs have to know that they can't run things and have the city's respected citizens hauled into court by some private fool-detective.

Though Kennington readily detected what Gerard was going to demand of him, he played for time by asking: "Well, what is it you wish of me?"

"Very simple; you're the prosecutor, are you not? Don't bring the case to the attention of the Grand Jury; have Benson released from bond, that's all."

"Positively not!" Kennington bluntly retorted, looking Gerard squarely in the face.

"Why?" Gerard roared.

"For the sake of honesty and justice! No case during my incumbency of this office will be permitted to slip through without having been disposed of in the proper legal manner. Benson, as well as any one else, will not be made an exception."

Gerard exclaimed, "Don't make a fool of yourself, young man. Don't seek to exploit your personal virtues at the expense of those who elevated you to your present position; at least be grateful for the opportunity which has been given you."

"I did not seek the office which I now hold; in fact, it has been almost thrust upon me. I will serve the people who elected me, faithfully and honestly without stultifying or silencing the calls of my conscience. Let the consequences be what they may. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, you impudent upstart. I'll teach you to trifle with me. There is more than one way of taking care of such an ingrate as you are," and shaking his fist menacingly in Kennington's face he wheeled suddenly around and left the office.

CHAPTER V

A DARING ROBBERY

It was a fortnight later. The weather even seemed to contribute in making a grand success of the Charity Ball. The air was delightful and invigorating. The full silver moon of an unusually late autumn night cast a most benevolent mellow light upon the city and the lake. Richly cushioned limousines, one after another, drove up and stopped under the canopied porch of one of the palatial homes on the North side. From each of these elegant conveyances stepped beautifully gowned ladies and the city's fair debutantes. Among them were the Misses Rose Darrell and Jennie Gerard. Miss Darrell, the daughter of a millionaire meat packer, was expected to wear, on this occasion, the famous East Indian pearl necklace, which once was the property of a now impoverished English vice-reine. It would not be unfair to say that some of the guests were as much interested in seeing this renowned bit of personal adornment as they were in the dance affair itself. The room set aside for the dancing presented a scene of gayety and rich color. A Japanese garden effect was carried out, the walls were hung with white lattices entwined with Japanese morning glories in bright colors. The side lights were covered with Japanese shades in yellow and black; huge domes

in red and white with flowering tassels being used to shade the lights which dropped from the ceiling.

Mingling with the guests, in his genial, pleasant way, was the Hon. Joseph Gerard. He was a big, rotund man, of the hail-fellow-well-met type. His was a florid complexion, on which were visible numerous fine hair-like, scarlet, capillary tracings which testified of more than a speaking acquaintance with the wine cup and a continual good living. His weasel-like eyes peeped from beneath heavy, shaggy eyebrows, which surmounted the deep orbital sockets. But from them twinkled a merry good nature to his friends; while in anger to his enemies they became beady black orbs, giving off malevolent glances. He was possessed of a large, prominent nose; his jaw was square cut; his mouth was large, with lips thick and pouting. Around his tonsured pate was a ring of closely cropped iron gray hair, which yielded ungraciously to the caresses of the comb and brush. In fine, his face suggested a nature that was sensual and selfish, but full of strength and purposeful determination, which ruthlessly, without counting the cost, cast aside and crushed all obstacles that came in his way. He walked in a rather pompous semi-dignified manner, his head slightly inclined to the side, his general demeanor indicating extreme self-confidence and self-appreciation. He was scrupulously groomed; his clothes were so carefully constructed and draped by the tailor's art, that they gave him an appearance of gentility, but he was virtually devoid of the cultural attainments his looks falsely portrayed. There was one quality of his

character that saved him from many embarrassments when forced into social functions distasteful to him, namely: his ready wit and his infectious laugh.

His prominence in the political world made it impossible for him to escape attendance upon social functions such as the one that was being held on this particular evening; and, because of this fact he had received a certain amount of training in the usages of polite society that made it possible for him to be quite comfortable on such occasions.

It had been his constant practice since he had risen into political prominence to give liberally to churches and charitable organizations whenever he could do so with great ostentation and publicity. He always made it a practice to let his left hand — and his neighbor's eye — know what his right hand was doing in the way of public philanthropy; this studied charity had the desired effect upon the poor classes. He was in their eyes a hero and a humanitarian. His gifts to the poor were especially liberal just preceding election times, and this alms-giving was usually successful in securing votes for his party. His popularity with the saloon element could not be denied. He was their apostle and the leader of those who were loud in their demands and cries for personal liberty, whose interpretations of liberty meant license and debauchery. He was an honorary member of the Brewers' Association. As former member of the State Legislature, he had a state-wide reputation as an astute politician; and when at the last session he was called upon to make a deliberate choice between the demands of the respectable citizens of

the state and the libertines, for the abatement of the red light district, he harkened to the call of the latter, casting his vote in their favor. For many years he had been a senior vestryman of St. Paul's Cathedral, and an intimate friend of the bishop, also a very important personage and factor in the policies of the church. But owing to irregularities and to the public stand he had taken in certain matters, the ladies of the parish voted against him at the annual church meeting, deposing him from the official position which he had so long undeservingly held. As a result of this action, he never attended church again.

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During the course of the evening Jennie Gerard observed that there seemed to be an extreme but polite frigidity and reserve between her father and Arthur Kennington. They actually avoided one another. Even the guests were aware of the visible coldness the two men plainly displayed. Jennie found herself embarrassed on more than one occasion during the evening, and the pleasure she had anticipated was marred by this unexplainable state of affairs.

Just before the election her father had spoken of Kennington in the most glowing terms and had pictured him as one of the brilliant young men of the city, for whom fate held in store a splendid career. Then, too, Kennington had enjoyed the hospitality of her home, which had been marked by the most profound cordiality on the part of her father. She was at a loss to understand the mystery; she, therefore, determined to solve the problem.

In a tactful manner, without the least bit of pre-

sumption or forwardness on her part, she managed to reserve several dances for Arthur Kennington, hoping that during the course of the evening's pleasure she might discover the cause of this amazing situation. As they passed out of the ball-room on their way to the conservatory her father watched them suspiciously.

"This will never do," he muttered to himself. "I'll have to nip this performance in the bud;" and, malignantly he stared at Kennington, who did not fail to see that Mr. Gerard was watching them. Thus instant conflict raged within him.

Arthur Kennington freely acknowledged to himself that this young lady held for him an unusual attraction; she seemed to be entirely different from the rest of the ladies he had ever met. She was his equal mentally, and her physical charms called for his fullest admiration; he felt himself irresistibly drawn to her. When they had seated themselves on the bench that was almost hidden by two enormous bay trees, which had been placed at either end of the seat, she said: "Allow me to congratulate you on your election. I regret that I have not had the opportunity to do so heretofore. I suppose the duties of your office have been very pressing and that this has been the reason that you have not allowed your well-wishing friends to see you."

"Thank you,"—and before he could reply further she continued:

"We all were sorry that you did not attend the little party which father gave at our home to the Mayor and a few of the city officers."

Kennington winced a little at this last remark; he had not received an invitation and it was evident that Jennie was under the impression that he had.

It was clear to him that Gerard, as he had threatened, had already begun a subtle warfare upon him. He mused how Fate dealt out happiness and unhappiness with one single move of her hands.

Their conversation branched out into sociology, a topic dear to Miss Gerard's heart. Animatedly, she related how she had given close study and application to the leading questions of the unfortunate classes of humanity. She remarked that she would be glad if he would permit her to become acquainted with the methods of his office in dealing with the delinquents and that in exchange she would be pleased to take him along on one of her weekly tours through the slums of the city.

Kennington's heart beat rapidly as she was talking so interestedly and unaffectedly, and forgetting all about her father,— for the time being, — he most heartily agreed that they should exchange theories and experiences, when time permitted.

They decided to go on a slumming trip the following afternoon, and she was then in turn to attend one of the criminal court's sessions for delinquent youths. Thus, happy in each other's company, the knowledge of being of kindred mind and ideals served as an invisible bond between them.

They continued to chatter merrily and before they realized how quickly time had fled, a new partner came up and claimed Miss Jennie for the next dance.

As she walked away, resting her beautifully shaped hand on the arm of her new companion, Kennington experienced a peculiar sensation, the like of which he never felt. While he had no particular reason which would warrant him to do so, he was aware of a tinge of jealousy, or at least of a close relationship with that human passion.

True to his word, Sanderson attended the Charity Ball. Though he failed to receive a formal invitation he took care of this oversight on part of the hostess and found himself almost as welcome as the most popular guest who attended the function.

No one there was better acquainted with the follies and weaknesses of modern society than he. He knew how to take advantage of the selfishness, the desire for notoriety and personal advertisement that were to be found among the leaders of the city's fashionable circles.

Arrayed in an evening dress suit of finest broadcloth, he presented himself by sending his handsomely embossed card to Mrs. Stratton. This bit of cardboard purported that its owner was no other than the genial social reporter of the Daily Chronicle. The first step of his enterprise was entirely successful, for his newspaper ruse had promptly gained him admittance.

The vanity of Mrs. Stratton was gratified and she was indeed flattered that the leading paper should send a special representative to take note of the fete given at her residence. As she welcomed the young man she already had a vision of a whole column in

the daily news devoted to a complimentary description of the entertainment and her beautiful home. She could even see some of her social rivals grow green with envy as they read the account.

She was so determined that the newspaper item should be an unusual one, that she exceeded the customary formal courtesies given newspaper men and deliberately, with what she considered skillful forethought, introduced our professional crook to those present as a personal friend. The few doubts that existed in her mind as to the propriety and wisdom of such an act were soon dissipated.

With perfect ease and elegance Sanderson moved among the persons assembled, who represented the cream of the city's élite. He might have been heard discussing the sociological question of the day with Miss Gerard, and the latter was fascinated by the brilliancy and personal charm he evinced. With others he talked entertainingly of art, music and travel, and his graceful dancing excited the admiration of more than one of the young debutantes.

In the course of the evening he became the partner of Miss Darrell, and during the waltz, "The Wedding of the Winds," when his beautiful companion was giving herself over to the fullest enjoyment and abandonment of the sensuous glidings of the dance and the harmonies of the barcarolle, Sanderson keenly eyed the exquisite necklace of pearls that adorned her clear white throat. Business and not pleasure had brought him to this function. He must secure these jewels; they were within his grasp, yet he dare not take them now. But the battle was half

won. He had found them; the rest of the game would be comparatively easy.

When the dance was finished, Miss Darrell remarked that the ball-room was exceedingly warm and that she felt somewhat fatigued and suggested that they find a quiet place to rest. A more propitious favor could not have been asked of Sanderson, and without apparent purpose whatsoever, except to please, he escorted her to the adjoining conservatory. The place he chose was a veritable Cupid's bower, secluded and shaded by the broad leaves of Palmetto palms, which might shield them from the inquisitive glances of curious eyes.

In the centre of the conservatory an electric fountain cooled the atmosphere as its waters, tinted with the multi-colored lights, tinkingly splashed and fell from the concha shell supported by a marble mermaid. The air was laden with lotus-like odors of exotic hothouse plants, which almost seemed to induce a sense of giddiness and anæsthesia. The whole situation was one calculated to produce a riot of emotions and sentiments.

Under the physical spell of the environments and situation, the restraint and coldness of a formal etiquette were loosened, and their tête-à-tête took on a very personal character. Blushingly she picked off a blossom from a bleeding heart plant near her and coquettishly adjusted it to the lapel of his coat. Emboldened by this act, Sanderson gently pressed her hand. This little innocent familiarity was not resented. For Sanderson the moment was now right to carry out his coolly laid plan.

Casually he drew from his pocket a silken handkerchief in which were carefully wrapped several pearls of chloroform, which had been combined with a pungent perfume, the fragrance of hyacinths, to allay the odor of the lethal drug. Suddenly with his right arm, which had rested upon the high back of the settee, he grasped her with a vice-like grip about the shoulders and with his left hand he crunched the pearls in the handkerchief and quickly placed it tightly over her mouth and nose. Unable to scream and terribly frightened by this unexpected assault, Miss Darrell fainted and in a few seconds she became completely unconscious. While in this helpless condition Sanderson deftly removed the necklace from her throat and replaced this priceless jewel by the spurious strands of pearls he had ordered made in New York, to resemble the original. All this was accomplished in but a few minutes, and to cover his tracks and ward off any possible suspicion he ran quickly to the ball-room and informed the first ladies he encountered, that Miss Darrell had suddenly fainted.

Miss Darrell was still unconscious from the effect of the chloroform and was hastily carried to a bedroom, where she regained consciousness after a very short while. She was so thoroughly frightened that she was unable to make any explanation of the unfortunate occurrence. The sham necklace was carefully removed and laid aside on the dressing table; but as luck would have it, the bottle of smelling salts used in the reviving attempts was tipped over by the careless maid-in-waiting and a few drops of the aro-

matic spirits of ammonia splashed upon the counterfeit pearls. Almost instantly those coming in contact with the chemical lost their lustre and color. Slowly they changed into mere sticky worthless beads.

The frightened maid fearfully informed Miss Darrell of the lamentable accident. Immediately she called her mother and they were indeed confounded and chagrined. Some of the ladies present, who were jealously inclined and much given to gossip, whispered it about that the would-be famous pearls were after all nothing but a fraud. Miss Darrell and her mother realized that they must be the victims of some gross defraudation and fully resolved to go immediately to their jeweler.

This unexpected happening temporarily marred the pleasure of the evening; but the dancing was resumed an half hour later. Little did the guests suspect that a daring robbery had been committed. They only thought the young lady had fainted, and she shed no further light upon the episode, partly because of a guilty feeling of having been too encouragingly familiar with Sanderson, a complete stranger, and partly that she and her mother did not wish the knowledge that the pearls were worthless to become public property.

Soon Miss Darrell quietly left the crowd. And with distraught and hurt feelings, she and her mother bade the hostess a hasty good-bye. Under the cover of the general excitement of the guests Sanderson stealthily donned his street coat and slipped out of the house entirely unnoticed. It was


at least an hour later before Mrs. Stratton had missed him and then she ascribed his unannounced departure to the customary haste with which reporters are wont to rush to the city editor's office to get their "write-ups" in shape for the early morning edition of their papers. The morning issue was a great disappointment to Mrs. Stratton, for she failed to find a glowing account of the Annual Charity Ball, which had been given under her direction.

Mrs. Darrell and her daughter, as planned, paid an early visit to the jeweler and he frankly told them that the necklace which they submitted to him for test was made up of nothing but the rankest imitation of pearls and that in some manner they had been shamefully fleeced of the priceless necklace he had sold them.

Miss Darrell spoke but little to her mother on the way home, but on their arrival the strain of the whole affair was so tremendous that she confessed her entire relationship with Sanderson on the evening before. She vividly described how he had suddenly grasped her about the shoulders and pressed a handkerchief saturated with a pleasant smelling, but powerful, drug against her lips and nostrils until she lost consciousness. Her mother did not stop to reprove her conduct, since the theft of the jewels alone occupied her mind. It did not require the shrewdness of a Pinkerton detective to arrive at the conclusion that Sanderson, the amiable would-be reporter, was the robber. A general alarm for his capture was given the police and detective departments of the city. The family offered a very liberal reward for

the recovery of the jewels and the apprehension of the gentleman thief. Omar Khayyam, in his Rubaiyat, asks, "Where are the birds of last year's nests?" As vainly they might have asked for Sanderson's whereabouts. . . .

On the morning following the daring robbery the Twentieth Century Flyer was rapidly lessening the distance between the city of X—— and New York, and in one of the comfortable chairs of the parlor car was seated a very devout priest. He untiringly read his breviary. The conductor, after having once looked at his ticket, never troubled him again. The monk, however, was none other than Sanderson, carrying concealed under his religious garments the valuable necklace, which he was taking to the most conservative "fence" in New York, known only to a few of the most daring and skillful crooks of the country.



CHAPTER VI

SLUMS OF THE CITY AND LOVE'S AWAKENING

For a long time after his return home, Kennington sat beside his book-laden table, thoughtfully musing. He felt extremely restless and his mind was filled with dual emotions. While at Mrs. Stratton's home he had been quick to perceive the icy coldness, the studied incivility and the watchful eagerness with which Gerard's eyes had followed his every move. The insinuations and taunting thrusts which filled Gerard's conversation when Kennington was near, deliberately foretold the open conflict that was to rage later between them. Kennington felt in his soul a growing and bitter antagonism toward "the heeler of the 13th." It was all clear to him now, how Gerard and his henchmen must have, at one time, looked upon him as a person who would make a willing, conscienceless, pliant tool, a veritable cat's paw to pull the political chestnuts out of the fire. This thought angered him and he said to himself, "Do I look like a puppet and weakling? I must, or they would not have chosen me."

His irritated feelings were somewhat relieved, when irresistibly, but not unwelcomed, there crowded into his mind the pleasant memories of the evening which were concerned with Miss Gerard. For the first time he began to realize that his feelings toward her were rapidly changing. She was something more to

him than a mere passing acquaintance, who happened to be interested in life's social problems, the same as he was. What had prompted a slight resentment toward others, especially the young men who had claimed the pleasure of her company in dance and conversation? This experience was entirely new to him and with a lawyer's mind he tried to analyze it. This new emotion was not subject to the methods of the court. In matters of the heart, intuition, woman's substitute for reason, served him better. Was it love's awakening? He was uncertain, for he had never been in love before. He had met Jennie but three times, and was this noble passion born of so brief an acquaintance? It does so happen in fiction, but seldom in real life. If it were love, what chances had he to win? Was not her father his virulent enemy, anxious for an opportunity to harm him? How could she ever know of the foul purposes her father had in mind when he selected Kennington to be the city attorney, and that now he was but waiting for the chance to open a vicious and unprincipled fight upon him? If this were love Kennington would win her in spite of all obstacles which now appeared to be insurmountable. He was not a quitter. He was a fighter. He would overcome the apparently hopeless odds; he would not only clean the city's administration of graft, as Hercules did the Augean stables, but he would win the girl. Eagerly looking forward to the appointment he had with Miss Jennie the following day, his mind filled with thoughts of the pleasantest anticipations, on retiring he soon fell asleep.

The next morning the city's court was filled with a motley, shiftless, dissipated, poverty-stricken crowd. There were vagabonds, petty thieves, women of the demi-monde, drunkards and even children under the age of fifteen. All these had been caught in the meshes of the law's net. Some had indulged in drunken fights; some had stolen property; others had disturbed the peace; but why were these children here? True it was, that they were charged with truancy and petty thefts. Unlike other prosecuting attorneys, Kennington's mind went farther back than the docket where their warrants were tabulated. Were these children criminal, and if they were, who was to blame? Where did they live? Where were their parents? . . . And as the court quickly ground out justice, or more correctly, futile, temporary punishments, these pertinent questions occupied Kennington's inquisitive mind.

When twelve-thirty came for the morning court to adjourn, Kennington's heart was cheered and gladdened by the thought that this was the afternoon when he should find himself in company with Miss Gerard. They were to make a tour of the city's slums as students of the existing social conditions. Promptly at one-thirty he descended the steps of the city court-house and walked to the curb; in a few minutes there drove up to him the elegant black electric coupé driven by Miss Gerard. With a cordial handclasp she invited him to enter. He was glad indeed that it was a coupé instead of a car that might have been driven by a curious chauffeur.

They soon left behind them the heart of the great

city and passed down into the tenement district, a portion of the metropolis where seventy-five thousand people lived in an area less than a mile square. The streets were narrow, dirty, filthy and unswept. There were no yards, no grass, no trees, not even the slightest vestige of any living green thing. There were rows of dingy, grayish colored tenements, most of them were about four stories high. The front doors opened out upon the steps which stretched in unbroken rows for squares and squares. God's fresh air and sunshine were shut out of these barn-like buildings, which were sparsely supplied with windows. These structures were pervaded with filthy, vile odors; vicious dank miasma lurked in their basements and foundations. They were veritable plague spots. In single rooms of these dismal places of habitation whole families lived without privacy, without decency. Family after family were sheltered one above another, from the basement to the roof, and the tenants were modern cliff dwellers, but denied the buoyancy of sunshine, fresh air and the freedom that were accorded the ancient inhabitants of the cliffs in the deserts of Arizona.

Why are these dens of sickness permitted to exist? Why does not Christian civilization destroy these breeders of social and economic crimes, sexual immorality, venereal disease and anarchism? The answer is to be found in the ignorance and carelessness of the good people. In the selfishness and civic unrighteousness of society, in the avariciousness of heartless financial and church corporations, which possess these social plague spots for the reason that

they pay enormous dividends. They support the idle.

One doleful, gloomy shack in this district which cost less than one thousand dollars to erect, yields an annual income of six hundred dollars.

In another portion of this municipality some human beings were almost surfeited with too much, while here in this section, others almost starved with a little more than nothing. Here could be heard the wailing, piteous cry of half-starved children; while in the distance there was, but unheard, the happy laughter of healthy, care-free children. Here was social asphyxia; there was a riot of wanton abundance. Here society shrinks from its true responsibility, and while these evils might be corrected, they are not.

As they were slowly driving down these lanes of human misery and abject poverty, Kennington wondered if this fair, sweet girl, seated by his side, really knew or could realize the full depth of what these nauseating, frightful, pestilential conditions meant to the ones living in the midst of them. She was utterly out of place, and did not her position in life make it impossible for her to properly understand how these mortals eked out their existence in their squalid habitations? Did she not view it as one afar off? How could she, reared in affluence and extravagant plenty, comprehend what it meant to want, to hunger, to be insufficiently clothed and housed, to be ill and not cared for, to live day in, day out in a wretchedness, physical and mental, compared to which death would be a most welcome change?

Though he had never experienced this dearth and destitution, he knew, however, what it meant to undergo privations, of which, these upon whom fortune smiled more benignly, never have the slightest idea. Kennington wonderingly inquired of Miss Gerard, "May I ask how you became interested in this social work? I should have believed that it could be only distasteful to you."

"On the contrary, I find it most absorbing, more so than card parties, dances and pink teas; for those are such inane, stupid affairs," she animatedly replied. "My attention was most forcibly attracted to these conditions while attending the University. It was on one Thanksgiving day, when with two of my girl classmates, I drove to the University football game. On the way to the grounds our machine unfortunately struck a little girl, about eleven years old, who had thoughtlessly cavorted in front of our car, which was going at a rapid pace. At first we wanted to take her to a hospital, but the poor child begged so piteously to be taken home, which proved to be in the tenement district, that we finally yielded to her wishes, when it was found that she was not seriously hurt, but only thoroughly frightened. Then it was, Mr. Kennington, that I first received a real glimpse of how the other half of the world lives, — or rather tries to live. The masterful preface of the famous 'Les Miserables,' was involuntarily recalled to my mind:

"'So long as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation, which, in the face of civilization, artificially creates hells on earth and

complicates a destiny that is divine with human fatality; so long as the three problems of the age — the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of woman by starvation, and the dwarfing of children by physical and spiritual night — are not solved; so long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible; in other words, and from yet a more extended point of view, so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, books like this cannot be useless.' ”

During the recital of the long quotation, Kennington's love and admiration for this charming young woman grew so strong that he could hardly restrain himself; he felt impelled to clasp her in his arms and then and there declare his love. He had been closely watching her lovely face, and when she had finished the citation she turned to him and said as she colored under his ardent gaze: “Is not the argument sound? Are not the reasons sufficient? And you as an accomplished lawyer have not a word in retort or rebuttal? ”

“ ‘When wisdom speaks 'tis best to listen,’ ” quoted her companion.

“How humble you are this afternoon, Mr. Prosecutor. I surely would not be afraid were I arraigned before you in the rôle of a defendant.”

“You never would have to be afraid of me, my dear friend;” he softly replied, but the look he gave her belied his statement, for she plainly perceived that there was imminent danger of being wooed impetuously if she but gave him the slightest opportunity. She was not averse, however, to the sentiment displayed by her companion, yet with keen

feminine tact she warded off a declaration of love, by driving her machine to the curb and saying: "Here's where we will leave the coupé and now make our visits on foot, as my friends are all within a short walking distance."

As they stepped from the machine, Miss Gerárd was at once accosted by three unwashed and unkempt urchins begging for pennies. Opening her purse she gave each one a small piece of silver. With a most hasty "thank you" these children scampered away gleefully. If it had been any one else but Miss Gerard, Kennington might have remonstrated against this bit of seeming promiscuous charity. He thought to himself, would not this alms-giving teach these little street Arabs to become vagabonds and further encourage them in their mendacity? Innocently, Jennie answered the Judas Iscariot philosophy, which leads many to strain at gnats and swallow camels, by stating: "I presume some people would criticise me severely for giving money to these poor waifs and say that I was only encouraging them to become professional beggars. But I do not believe that this is the case. For they are children, and though poor are entitled to the childish delights other children are enjoying as a matter of course. Therefore, if I can be instrumental in shedding a ray of happiness into their pitiful lives, I am ever ready and willing to do so."

Kennington reddened at this remark; had she been able to divine the question which had arisen in his mind? And if she had, he knew that she must know, also, that love for her had already awakened

in his heart. Just as they passed a most sordid, mean-looking tenement apartment, which opened into the street, the dilapidated door was pushed back, and whirling eddies of the city's dust and dirt found their way inside.

"Here is a terrible state of affairs."

"Yes, tell me more about it."

"In this wretched place lives a more wretched family. The father is a drunkard; a boy of thirteen is in the State Reformatory; and the mother you see standing at the window, listlessly gazing into the street, is an epileptic. See the puny little infant huddled in her arms! What is its heritage? A triad of direful contemporaries—disease, degeneracy and poverty? How can so-called enlightened society permit these conditions to exist?"

Kennington shrugged his shoulders thoughtfully, but made no answer. Jennie blushed slightly and continued, stamping her dainty little foot in the earnestness of her conviction: "I believe in calling a spade a spade, therefore you will please not consider me brazen or bold for expressing my views concerning these conditions, just as I see them. I have thought marriage as it exists today is crudely protected. The matrimonial ceremony itself is many times affording protection for licentiousness and is permitting the debauchery of the innocent; under its theological cloak the venereally diseased roué is united in holy wedlock with the virgin; the tuberculous are given in marriage; the insane and epileptic are linked together; and idiotic, epileptic, blind, tubercular or otherwise diseased children are born of these mar-

riages, coming into the world to suffer, to fill our state institutions, to live lives of torture until relieved by death. These people marry indiscriminately, rear children without care, without the ideals of propriety and morality. Many of these children will in the future become paupers; many of them will be charged with crimes and appear in our criminal courts to be tried for acts for which they are not responsible, but which fate, heredity and environment have forced upon them.

Kennington was struck with her marvelous denunciation and scathing arraignment of society's negligence.

"These facts are too true," he answered, "but what is the remedy and how may it be applied?"

"There is the difficulty," was the grave rejoinder, "the greatest impediment to the solution of the situation is human selfishness."

What would she have said if she had known that it was her father who owned these crime-breeding buildings in which unfortunates and derelicts of humanity were housed, in violation of the laws of the city, of hygiene, and of humanity? Kennington did not apprise her of this fact for obvious reasons. This charming young lady, whom he had learned to love so dearly, was actually enjoying pleasures and luxuries that accrued from the rentals of these tenements. What would she do and say when she discovered the truth of the matter?

They visited about a dozen homes, and Kennington came face to face with such desolation as he had never seen nor heard. Yet notwithstanding all the

misery and woe they saw displayed, their spirits were exultant. In fact, Jennie was always highly interested in her settlement work; but she never had felt such an indefinable elation and enthusiasm as on this afternoon. A pink blush graced her cheeks and her eyes were luminous with a happiness not experienced heretofore. As they drove back to the business section of the city, Kennington grew eloquent in his praises, declaring that she had opened up to his vista new fields of activity and that he would be pleased, if she would permit him to enlist in her services, to assist in these weekly visits to the slums. Though he hinted strongly that he desired to join her again on the following Wednesday, she did not exactly bid him do so, and much too soon for Kennington they arrived at the city's temple of justice.

Just as he stepped from the machine Jennie's father strode down the court-house steps and, totally ignoring Kennington, in a husky voice asked of his daughter: "Going home?"

Much surprised at this act of open incivility, on the part of her father, she lost momentarily control of her speech and only nodded her head in affirmation. Gerard closed the coupé door with a slam which bid fair to be disastrous to its glass window. Then after a silence of several squares, Jennie took courage to ask: "What's the matter, daddy? You seem out of humor, did —"

"Never mind 'what's the matter'; there's plenty the matter, and you'll find it out shortly. Only this much now, never again let me see or hear of your

being in company with that traitor! No, don't answer back, enough said for the present," and with an odd shrug of his broad shoulders, that expressed more ill-nature than his words, he settled back on the cushion and sulkily glared ahead into the street.

CHAPTER VII

BREAKERS AHEAD

During the long three-mile ride home from the city court-house Gerard spoke not a word, wrapped in a moody, disconcerting silence. His daughter was deeply pained at this unusual conduct. With all his faults of political chicanery and hypocrisy, he was a most indulgent parent to his only child, Jennie. He literally worshiped and idolized her. Her every whim was his law; to make her happy, to gratify her every wish with the great wealth of means that he had at his disposal, was his keenest delight.

It was true he did not altogether approve of his daughter's philanthropic work in the city's slums; but he did not interfere for two reasons: first, because of his intense love for his only child; and, second, Jennie's charitable work threw about him a cloak of respectability which more or less hid his innate rascality.

Miss Gerard was deeply grieved by her father's mysterious demeanor. The afternoon that she had spent so joyously in the company of Arthur Kennington had terminated dismally. On reaching home she immediately went to her room and threw herself upon the bed in a wretched state of dejection. The calm resourceful reserve of her nature temporarily gave way and she found some relief in a flood of hot, blinding tears. Convulsive sobs shook her frame in

the stress of her sorrowful emotions. Lachrymose episodes were very rare occasions in her life. Something dreadful must have happened, she argued to herself; never before had her father treated her in this manner, and she knew no reason why he should do so now. His attitude stifled all attempts at inquiry. The blackness of her father's character was unknown to her. To Jennie he was a loving parent, the acme of all that was virtuous, strong and kind. He was her confidanté. He was the repository of her hopes and ambitions, and her cherished sociological schemes. His genial warmth and co-operation had developed in her the tenderest and keenest love. And while she dearly loved her fashionable, austere, self-centered mother, — a veritable puritanical aristocrat, — Jennie had more than once acknowledged to herself that her father held the greater place in her heart's affection.

The cry relieved her injured and distraught feelings greatly and soon she regained her normal composure. The evening meal was passed in an unusual silence; contrary to his customary joviality, for Gerard generally led in animated conversation, he spoke but very few words to his wife and daughter. The stillness was especially oppressive to Jennie; it seemed to be the ominous calm which so often precludes a storm.

After dinner was finished Gerard went to the living room and helped himself to a strong black cigar from the humidor on the table, lighted it, and vigorously began to puff little grayish-blue ringlets upward to the ceiling. Although almost at the breaking point

with anxiety to know the cause of her father's state of ill-temper, Jennie was too independent and determined to again inquire the reason. Her father had rebuffed her on the way home; she therefore definitely decided if any explanation was made of the cause of this very extraordinary action, that her father would have to take the initiative.

Soon her desire in this direction was gratified. Her father called from the adjoining room and with great expectation she answered the summons. When entering, she observed that her father's wrath had subsided considerably; he greeted her with his old-time pleasant smile and bade her sit on the arm of the chair he was occupying.

"Well, daughter," he began, "you will please forgive your old daddy for the gruff, mean way in which he treated you this afternoon."

"Why, certainly, father," she answered, patting him gently.

"You see, Jennie, it is just like this; I cannot stand to see you in company with that miserable upstart, Kennington."

"Why, father?" she exclaimed, in startled surprise, "I thought you and he were the best of friends; and you gave him such a royal good time, a short while before the election. What has happened to make it all so different now?" she anxiously inquired.

"Dearie, you'll excuse me and not make it necessary for any lengthy explanation. Just trust to your father's judgment and all will be well."

"I always have; but I know you will pardon me this one time if I press you for the reason why. Mr.

Kennington seemed so much interested in my slum work this afternoon and even requested that I permit him to go with me upon my next visit."

"No doubt he did! He would ingratiate himself in your eyes if he possibly could; just so much more for his double-dyed crookedness!"

"What do you mean, that he is dishonest?"

"Yes; dishonest and more than that."

By this time Jennie had become keenly interested. Was she mistaken in her opinion of Arthur Kennington? How could he be as her father described him? Yet she dare not question her parent's word.

"Tell me more specifically," she persisted.

Gerard was somewhat irritated at her earnest insistence for an explanation and his mind was busy thinking out a reply that would bear inspection and wear a semblance of truth.

"Just this, Jennie," he spoke slowly: "Kennington is an ungrateful, impudent upstart. He would injure me if he could; and, with the duality of his makeup, he would seek to enlist your sympathies against your father."

"No, no;" she vehemently cried; "those who are your enemies are mine also. No one will ever change my love for you!"

"There, that's a good girl; just as I knew you would be. But you must concede the fact, your old daddy has seen more of the world and its many, many deceptions and disappointing ways than you have; and, dear, experience is a bitter teacher. Thus, if it is even possible, I'll try to save and spare you any unnecessary unpleasantness."

“But, daddy, what has that got to do with Mr. Kennington? What did he really do to incur your displeasure, to warrant your speaking of him in such denouncing terms? You know I always wanted to know the why and wherefore of everything; and surely in this instance I am not lacking in curiosity to get the facts in the case. Perhaps there is a misunderstanding which if explained can be lifted and—”

“No, Jennie, you do not realize what you say. I have positive proofs of the correctness of my assertions; and I wish you would not press me to tell you the details now; only this for the present, Kennington is truly the personified illustration of the ancient proverb: ‘The snake bites the hand that feeds it.’”

“Why, that’s simply awful, father, I never heard you express yourself so forcibly and bitterly before; and please excuse me for saying so, but I can hardly believe it. Mr. Kennington does not in the least impress me as such a character,” she loyally added, in defence of her newly made friend.

This last remark angered Gerard not a little and he had to exert every bit of his will power not to flare up, lest by doing so he would spoil his well-laid plans. He knew his daughter’s independence full well, and that with harsh words he would accomplish but very little; hence he reefed his emotional sails and, outwardly calm, he replied:

“Kennington is certainly very fortunate to possess in you such a staunch champion for his cause; but I am afraid, dearest, he is absolutely unworthy of it. He was elected to his present position from an obscure, unprofitable practice, as a poor, battling

lawyer, with more bills to pay than briefs to make. No sooner, however, has he become warmed in his new chair, as prosecuting attorney, than he plays to the gallery frequenters, like cheap actors in small vaudeville shows. He forgets who it was that placed him where he is; he uses his office and the power vested in it for personal advertisement and aggrandizement, trampling under foot all usages of political conventions and, not only that, but the common ordinary decency which calls for gratitude toward friends who have helped him. As I have said before, he caters to the silly women's clubs; to the morbid, muck-raking editors of spurious, would-be reform papers; surrounds himself with a halo of self-righteousness, simply causing a riot in the court-house circles and deviating entirely from the tactful and shrewd business methods of his predecessor."

As he paused to take a long pull at his half extinguished cigar, Jennie, who had patiently listened to him, interpolated: "But, daddy, Mr. Blake got into disrepute while in office and you yourself said before the election that Mr. Kennington would make a clean, honest, fearless incumbent of the office of city attorney."

Gerard almost groaned aloud at the recital of his own words, which he too well remembered saying on the night he introduced the young lawyer into his home. After a moment's deliberation he replied: "Yes, I know I did say so; but did you never in your young life learn that one often is compelled to retract statements made under a false conception, or impression of circumstances? This is an instance of

that kind; Kennington has bitterly disappointed us all; and not that, only, he cares little about it; on the contrary, is very arrogant. When spoken to, in a most conciliatory and friendly manner that his course is not an advisable one for the good of the city, he bristles up and as good as tells us all to go to smithereens. Take it from me, as gospel truth, Kennington will prove more of a disgrace to the office he so defiantly holds, than Blake ever was or ever could have been. I truly wish now we had put Blake on the ticket again. I dare say we would have pulled him through the shoals of opposition as easily as we did elect that scoundrel Kennington.—But come, girlie, enough of this distasteful subject, and in conclusion let me have your promise that you will not associate with that gay deceiver any more; eh? ”

But Jennie, who had closely followed her father's arraignment of Kennington, did not give the desired assurance, and though true to her former statement that no one could alter the love she bore for her father, she did not quite unravel the mystery, and hence did not give in at once. Even though Gerard had grown emphatic and stormy in his speech, at no time did he give any definite and convincing proof of Kennington's alleged dishonesty and unfitness for the prosecutorship.

She arose still mystified and kissing her father's forehead, she slowly said:

“I know you mean your best by me and would not wittingly advise me wrongly; but, father, I should be unworthy to be called your daughter if

I would give you a promise, even if it pleased you most highly, before I fully realized what I was promising. I have found and considered Mr. Kennington a perfect gentleman and I am loath to believe otherwise unless I have positive proof that he is not. Do you remember when I went to school, and I came to you for help with my arithmetic problems; you would invariably say: 'Work them out yourself, my dear; and then you'll understand them better;' so I am going to work out this problem for myself now, before I give you a definite promise. Good night, daddy! Don't be angry with your daughter, who is, as you so often say, 'a chip off the old block'."

After she left the room Gerard softly swore to himself, "If this don't beat h——!" Proofs she wants; all right, Miss Headstrong; proofs you shall have even at the cost of a few tears from those fiery, proud eyes of yours."

Lighting a fresh cigar he fell to scheming; while Jennie with mixed feelings sought her room and gave herself over to deep thoughts. While making her evening toilet, prior to retiring for the night, Kennington's words, actions and looks of the afternoon would ever come to her mind; and though she believed in her father, she could not fully put unfaltering faith into the veracity of the harangue with which he had regaled her. Soon she yielded her tired self to sleep, but again in her slumbers she was on a slumming tour with Kennington at her side; and though sorrow and woe surrounded them, glorious sunshine shone down from above; for love was within their hearts.

The following morning, try as he may, Gerard could hardly be civil to his family; the cause for this being that the morning paper which he was reading at the breakfast table, while sipping his cup of coffee, contained headlines and subsequent statements below which caused him not a little worry.

"What's the news, Daddy?" Jennie cheerily asked him.

"Here, read for yourself," Gerard growled, tossing the paper over to her; and, in so doing, he nearly capsized the silver percolater.

"That ought to open your eyes about that miserable hypocrite and traitor, Kennington, if nothing else will."

"Why, Joseph Gerard, how rude you are this morning," his prim wife remarked, casting a disapproving look at him.

"Well, I always said a man could never argue with a woman; and here are two against one; so I am going to the office where at least I am the undisputed boss during the day." And noisily he stalked out of the dining-room to go down town. Jennie then read the following caption:

PROSECUTOR KENNINGTON HOT ON THE TRAIL OF
THE GRAFTERS! SOME MEN PROMINENT
IN HIGH CIRCLES TO BE UNMASKED
AND DENOUNCED! A CIVIC RE-
FORM TO SWEEP OVER THE CITY
AS NEVER BEFORE
KNOWN IN ITS
HISTORY!

This was followed by a column and a half of explanatory statements which Jennie eagerly read. Having done so, she said to her mother, "I do not see what is wrong about this and why papa should worry himself into a frenzy because the prosecutor tries to take up the duties that he has sworn to perform."

"Oh, child! Why do you worry me with miserable politics? I get enough of that from your father; I'm not in the least interested in it. Look up the society page and read to me 'who's who.' See if the bazaar of St. Paul's has been announced."

Jennie complied with her mother's wishes; and, after having satisfied them, Jennie went into the library to write a letter to Kennington. At first she hesitated, thinking it might be unmaidenly and improper to do so; but upon further consideration she fully resolved to put to him the disagreeable question which distressed her mind, as a friend, which he professed to be, that he might shed light upon this subject.

She sat at her desk for quite a while buried in profound study; once a faint smile flitted over her beautiful face, and a slight blush stole across her cheeks when she read the appellation: "My dear Sir." Soon her pen flew over the paper which was adorned in one corner with her monogram "JG." When her writing was finished she read the inquiry carefully over, and then in a bold hand-writing addressed the envelop, "Hon. Arthur Kennington, City Attorney, Court-House, City."

Then she took up some other correspondence and

for a while the letter to Kennington was forgotten. Two young lady friends came during the course of the morning and before she was aware of it luncheon time had arrived.

Contrary to his custom Gerard came home, giving as an excuse that he had left some papers in the library which he needed that afternoon. In reality he had returned to offer Jennie some substantial proof of Kennington's unworthiness of her company. After luncheon he followed Jennie into the library and seeing the letter to Kennington on the desk he slyly said: "Ah, you have been taking your young Lochinvar to task, eh? Well, that's the girl for me. Give me the letter and I'll hand it to him in person, as I am going to his office this afternoon."

"By the by, I heard some hard talk about him this morning, which," — he added hypocritically, — "I hope is not true, for I did not think he was so bad as all that."

"What do you mean?" his daughter anxiously inquired.

"Oh, nothing now, dear, wait till you hear from him in answer to your letter; may be it is all talk, and all will be well."

Grateful for this seeming and unexpected change in her father's disposition toward Kennington, Jennie gave her father a hearty hug and kiss.

In the blackness of his heart, what must Gerard have felt over this undeserving display of affection!

CHAPTER VIII

CAPTURED

In the mean time under the tutelage and guidance of Toledo Red, Jere was becoming quite an accomplished petty thief and pickpocket; but he was lacking the ability to conceive and plot a crime of any magnitude. Yet with an instinctive and innate fox-like cunningness, led by a teacher, he was able to consummate many thefts that kept him and George supplied in a fair amount of spending money. George had learned many tricks of "the trade" from his own personal experience and he had also gathered much information and knowledge of thievery while serving terms in various prisons.

He had on many occasions explained to Jere that the members of their profession talk over their exploits and accomplishments while in their enforced retreats in the state bastille. Here plans for the future escapades are hatched and devised. The first-time criminal, or novice in crime, is often literally taught and schooled in criminality; he may come out a finished product, — unreformed and vindictive against society. The universal rule of silence in penitentiaries cannot prevent conversation and the dissemination of gossip. With the skill of a ventriloquist, one prisoner communicates, by means of "the grape vine telephone," to another the information he has to give. A yeggman, just received in

prison, tips off to a prisoner who is soon to go out, the location of certain loot and booty which can be turned into money with which to secure the aid of an attorney to have the former's sentence reduced.

Jere was not slow in absorbing the lessons which George intended for him to receive during the recitals of interesting prison episodes and underworld philosophy. Jere's ambition to become an accomplished crook fed ravenously upon the criminal pabulum which was daily dished out to him. He was ever on the alert to prove to George and Sanderson that he had profited by the instructions they had imparted to him. Sanderson's successful robbery of the pearls filled Jere's heart with the wildest sort of desire to perform a coup-de-mâitre in the art of thieving. He was not content to let well enough alone and was growing somewhat tired of simply snatching pocket-books from unsuspecting females, mostly shopgirls going home on pay nights. He argued to himself that his minor sneak thieveries involved just as great a risk as did a job worth while.

Soon an opportunity offered itself which gave him a chance to measure his ambition with his abilities. A national convention was held in the City of the Lake and through the good offices of Sanderson, coupled with the necessary aid of two corrupt detectives, he was given a position as page in the convention hall. Here he found a fine field to ply his light-fingered trade. Quite a few well-filled wallets were reported as stolen from the delegates, who might not always have been any too sober. The sleuths of the city's debased police force, detailed to watch

the hall, loudly and emphatically proclaimed that no such thefts were possible in the assembly room, since the usual force for such gatherings had been trebled. Consequently no arrests were made and Jere was never suspected, as he was able to assume an air of such innocence, bordering even on simpleness, that no one would give him the credit of being able to steal pocketbooks from the political guests of the city.

Jere was emboldened and his vanity was gratified by his successes; and, without the least bit of grumbling he cheerfully gave up his tax for protection to the police lieutenant, who collected the tithes for whitewash and immunity in that district. These spasms of prosperity meant sumptuous "feeds," accompanied by the best of liquors which Dinty's cafe could afford. The money had been easily acquired, of course with some risk attached, and it had to be spent in haste. George wore good clothes as significant testimony of Jere's loyalty to him, and the younger crook satisfied his vanity with tailor-made suits; and a real diamond pin even adorned his gay neckties.

Jere's rise in crookdom brought him flattering invitations to join various mobs*; but persistently he refused to join them; endeavoring to imitate Sanderson, the highly proficient gentleman thief, who never had a pal and hence was not compelled to live in fear of an accomplice who, on being caught, might turn state's evidence. But little did Jere know in his arrogance and vanity, brought about by his brief

* A gang of pickpockets who work together.

successes, that such would never be the case with him. Sanderson had been endowed with a keen, active brain, the priceless heritage which his progenitors had bequeathed him. While Jere had fallen heir to a vicious physical endowment transmitted to him by the toxins of disease and degeneracy which had vitiated the blood of his ancestors.

On the day following the close of the political convention Jere and George spent the evening at Dinty's retreat, partaking of a light lunch which was supplemented by several rounds of drinks. Both grew loquacious and boastful. George recounted the successful robberies and burglaries of his youth and prime; and Jere was equally proud of his rascally accomplishments, but he secretly longed to go deeper into criminal work. He was not content to be classed as a pickpocket; he wished for a higher place in the criminal society, which is truly as stratified and full of caste as any other sphere of life.

While they sat there enjoying the fruits of their anti-social pursuits, the door of the saloon gently opened and in stepped a tall, slim gentleman who wore a slouch hat, the brim of which somewhat obscured his features. With his eyes cast down he walked straightway to the table where the couple were seated; and when he reached them, he gave George a vigorous slap on the back and extended his hand to Jere, who eagerly grasped it. They were both surprised for the instant, for the personage was no less than Fred Sanderson.

"Well, gentlemen, how are you? Here I am again, turned up just like a bad penny. I did not have an

opportunity to bid you good-bye as I suddenly left the city to attend to urgent business in old Gotham," and he smiled faintly at this remark. Both George and Jere at once surmised that Sanderson's statement referred to the theft of Miss Darrell's pearls, but neither dared to express their thoughts, and it was certain Sanderson would not. He was extremely reserved and close-mouthed about his personal affairs. After seating himself, Sanderson said, "Jere, you look very prosperous; business must be good. No one evidently has interfered with your pursuits of life, liberty and happiness."

Whereupon George made quick to reply in Jere's stead, "Yes, Fred, the Kid's been doing fine; he has taught a lot of 'big guns' to be a little more careful of their change in a strange city, hereafter. I was glad to see him do it. You know we had a political convention here this week, —"

"Of course I do; didn't I get him the job at the hall?" Sanderson impatiently interposed.

"Yes, yes, Fred; well as I was sayin', a big bunch of grafters was here tryin' to fool the public as usual and Jere gave them a little taste of their own medicine. Some of them squealed as loud as a lot of pikers, but it didn't do any good, Lieutenant O'Leary is a clean guy; he charges a feller a high tax; but he don't give a body the double cross as some of the bulls do."

Brimful of eagerness and suppressed egotism, Jere hastily added: "Yes, I've done fairly well but I would like to tackle something that is worth while."

"To try your nerve we'll put you on a real re-

spectable job. It's dead easy to work if you just keep a stiff upper lip. Go at it deliberately and with a determination to win. Now remember, Kid, there's some risk to be run; but there is no profession without such. You may be caught and you may not. But if you should be, don't be a baby."

"That's right," George interpolated, "don't squeal if you gits caught. Keep your mouth shut and say nothin'; a feller will never make a good gun* if he don't learn to do this."

"I'm no squealer!" Jere answered a little tartly; "and if I get pinched I'll take me medicine like a man; but I don't intend to let a flat-footed copper ketch me either, if I can help it."

For an hour or two the three chatted gaily, their conversation being punctuated now and then by draughts of lager. It was to be noticed that Sander-son did in reality consume but very little of the intoxicating beverages during the evening. He was fully aware that excessive drinking would materially interfere with his chosen vocation in life. His deeds of theft required a steadiness of nerves, and he was forced to adhere strictly to the principles of a relative sobriety. Whereas, both George and Jere freely indulged in drink. The former, on account of his shattered nerves, palsied by the use of morphine, and now having no firm purposes in life, was practically eking out a parasitical existence, depending upon the tainted earnings of his young protégé; and, for this reason, he gave himself freely over to indulgence. Jere, lacking the ability to deny the gratification of

* A crook.

his physical appetites, devoid of an intelligence which would permit him to reason soundly with logic and foresight, handicapped by an inebriate heredity, often drank himself into states of maudlin intoxication, and would have done so on this occasion had not George repeatedly nudged him, indicating that it would not do to drink too heavily in the presence of Sanderson, who had an inveterate aversion for drunken men.

Sanderson, looking at his beautifully engraved watch, arose and bade his friends good-bye; and as unobtrusively as he entered, he left the place. Reaching the main street he hired a taxi-cab and had himself driven to his fashionable quarters.

George and Jere remained until the bar-tender quietly informed them that the saloon had to close, in conformity to the law, but if they cared for any more drinks they would have to repair to the rear room used as a makeshift bar during closing hours for the accommodation of thirsty night prowlers. Upon receiving this notice, George, in a heavy, clumsy manner got on his feet and said to Jere: "Come on, Kid; you've had enough for one evening; let's go home;" and with a shuffling gait of semi-intoxication, they shambled out of the saloon into the darkness of the alley.

The next morning they were awakened from their heavy slumbers by the bright sunlight piercing through the dirty, besmudged window-panes of their sleeping quarters. Wearily they dressed themselves and prepared for the day's fateful adventure. Jere, in a languid manner, said to George:

"Let's go to Dinty's and get a bracer; my nerves is all shot to pieces."

"Yes," George sighingly replied; "mine are, too; if it were not for that fool Harrison law which put things on the hummer, a feller could take a stiff shot in the arm and get fixed up all right."

On arriving at the saloon each ordered a glass of liquor and then helped himself to a liberal portion of the free lunch. Half an hour later they emerged from the café in a much pleasanter frame of mind, due to the exhilarating stimulation of their "morning's morning."

"We've got nearly an hour yet, Kid, before you'se tackle a real job; so let's walk down town and when we get there it will be time for you to show what kind of stuff you're made of," George said; to which suggestion Jere acquiesced. Slowly they sauntered to the retail and banking district. On the way there they stopped at several saloons, in order to infuse more psuedo-courage and spirit of recklessness into their craven hearts and minds. Reaching the bank upon which they had decided that Jere should make his bold attack, Toledo Red stationed himself just outside the door, surreptitiously he slipped on a pair of blue glasses and folded a bunch of shoestrings in his crippled hand, assuming the rôle of a semi-blind mendicant, offering to the passer-by his wares in a pitiful, cracked voice.

When high noon was sounded all over the city by the sonorous tolling clocks and shrill whistles of the manufacturing establishments, Jere briskly walked into the bank and approached the paying teller's

window. He handed to that gentleman in waiting a note coming ostensibly from the Major of the Salvation Army, asking for two blank promissory notes. Keenly the bank official eyed Jere and scrutinized the written order which George, of course, had forged. When the teller turned round to comply with the request, the desired moment for our young crook was at hand. Quickly he thrust his long slim arm under the slight aperture of the wicker-work and grabbed a stack of bills.

He then ran away, rapidly placing the bundle of notes in his cap; when he reached the outer door, he dropped them both at George's feet and knocked the shoestrings from the old man's hand. With lightning rapidity Toledo Red stooped and picked up the articles dropped. Jere ran up the street as fast as possible. It can be readily guessed from the way this robbery was carried out, that it had been carefully planned; and, thus far, there was not the slightest hitch in the execution of their thieving scheme. But, as was to be expected, the teller, who had been taken so unaware, gave alarm; and when the bank detective rushed out to find Jere he encountered the old shoestring peddler, who deliberately got in his way under the pretense of selling him some of his wares. Little did the pursuer suspect that the stolen money was actually within his grasp.

The throng which went back and forth at this hour of the day made it impossible for the officer to follow Jere, and he gave up his chase.

Jere continued to speed madly up the street avoiding collision with the hurrying pedestrians, by skill-

fully dodging them. As he turned the corner of one of the side streets he ran directly against a big traffic policeman with great violence, almost upsetting this officer of the law. The impact threw Jere to the pavement; and, as he attempted to rise, he was roughly collared by the burly, angry policeman, whose huge physical bulk seemed to grow ten times in Jere's bewildered eyes.

"What the devil you doin'?" the officer blurted out; and, breathless, half-stunned and thoroughly frightened, Jere was unable to answer. The silence, the dishevelled appearance of the young man and the violence of their collision caused the blue-coated Hibernian to think a little more rapidly than usual; and he came to the conclusion that there must be something radically wrong with Jere. He was placed under arrest and sent to headquarters, slated as a "suspicious character."

Jere was transferred to jail at once. These shelters are often veritable toboggan slides to the criminal cesspools. This one he found to be unclean, full of vermin, ill-ventilated, and foul-smelling. In one corner sat a man, blear-eyed and diseased. Next to him lounged an aenemic, thin-chested fellow, who constantly coughed, and, with every paroxysm, sent a fine spray of tubercular sputum broadcast into the air. In this place of detention were hardened criminals, first offenders, juvenile prisoners and two hopeless lunatics awaiting transfer to a hospital for the insane.

In this miserable abode society was conducting a regular school of crime, where physical and moral

contagion vied with one another to drag down the innocent with the guilty into a maelstrom of human misery and vice. Jere at once made friends with one of the prisoners who proved to be a recidivist; he had served four prison terms and many jail sentences during his tempestuous life. The old man fell to talking about his exploits and all his stories of criminal adventure were readily assimilated by Jere. This newly found friend paternally advised him to keep his mouth shut, should he be questioned about himself; whereupon Jere promptly stated that his old pal, Toledo Red, had instructed him similarly.

"Is Toledo Red still livin'? I thought he was dead;" the other exclaimed. "I know him well; we celled next to each other in Auburn prison fifteen year ago. Old Red's some gun all right, me boy!"

This declaration further cemented their newly formed friendship. When supper time came, stale, musty bread, sparsely smeared with a pitch black substance bearing the misnomer of molasses, was handed out; the old man generously turned his share over to Jere who was ravenously hungry, having missed his noon-day meal. When passing this would-be supper to the young fellow, the donor sneeringly said: "Don't this beat the devil; the sheriff who runs this dump gits forty-five cents a day fer each of his boarders; and he don't spend a nickel at that to feed us; some graft, eh, me boy? Bad enough fer us fellers what have really separated the public from some of its coin, but it's darn tough on the fellow what's ditched in here innocently. Justice? There ain't no such thing any more!"

When night spread her sable pinions over the city, the jail seemed to be converted into a regular den of vice, much akin to the ones found in the underworld region. If any one had been successful enough to slip in money so carefully hidden as to escape the usual "frisk," given by the deputy jailer, he could purchase a small bottle of "mountain dew," paying, of course, a double price to the "trustee," who acted as a purchasing agent for those who could pay import duty.

Jere thought of what Toledo Red in one of his cynical dissertations had once said: "This world is nuthin' but a large ocean of grafters; the big fish eat up the little ones."

Thus even behind the bars, where, so to say, an enforced rectitude might be expected, this preying upon one another rampantly continues. The purchaser of the liquor, while realizing he is being fleeced, philosophically consoles himself with the universal proverbs, that a body cannot possess both the penny and the cake at the same time; or, if one wishes music the piper or the fiddler must be paid their price.

In one corner, seated on a long bench, was a group of men; judging from their clothes, they occupied a more prosperous station in life than their poorly clad comrades about them. These were gamblers and political offenders who had been caught through the relentless crusade of the new prosecutor, Arthur Kennington. Bail having been refused them, they tried to make their compulsory sojourn as pleasant as possible and indulged in frequent games of poker.

Match sticks were used in lieu of the customary tri-colored chips. The game became quite animated at times when one or the other accused a fellow gambler of cheating. In one instance a fist encounter ensued which bid fair to become a "free-for-all." Spittoons were used as missiles, broom-handles and mop-sticks took the place of the Irish shillalahs. The less courageous and peacefully inclined fled to their cells and bunks, while others joined in the battle-royal from a sheer lust of combativeness, punching and striking right and left, no matter at whom, just so some one came in contact with their fists.

Peace, or more properly quiet, was finally restored by the "cell-boss," a prisoner of pompous carriage and demeanor. He readily yielded to the urgent requests of some of the jailbirds, who shouted: "Kangaroo Court! Kangaroo Court!" A mimicry of a regular constituted court at law was carried on as follows: the instigator of all the trouble was grabbed by three self-appointed deputies, who dragged their victim to the sanctum of the cell-boss who was to act as judge. The latter in turn called upon "six honest men" to act as jurors; and espying Jere, who was well dressed, the "Judge" asked him to act attorney for the defendant. Jere felt quite elated and flattered that he should be picked out among such a large crowd, and, with considerable self-conceit in his ability to do the occasion justice, he proceeded to put up a defense for his client.

The rules of Blackstone, Webster's Dictionary and Harvey's Grammar were grossly ignored and disregarded; aided, however, by the guffaws and ejacula-

tion of the audience Jere waded through the performance fairly well. But His Honor, the cell-boss, who, by the by, was a curbstome lawyer of the shyster variety, was not amenable to argument and reason. "Tim Dugan was entirely at fault!" he said in his brief, but fiery, address to the "venerable" jury, and demanded a verdict of "guilty," which was forthcoming instanter. Dugan was fined two dollars in cash — for he could well afford it, as he had been very successful in raking in several "well-sweetened Jack-pots," while employing his customary tricks of a card shark. In addition, the court imposed a fine of ten strokes for "contempt of court," since Dugan had been so imprudent to remonstrate against the entire proceedings and the subsequent verdict. The fine was extracted from him by force and handed over to the court, to be spent the following day for a fresh supply of "the makin's," — contraband smoking tobacco.

Later in the evening a maudlin object was brought in and in less than five minutes he was relieved of his fairly good clothes, hat, socks and shoes; others none too clean and of more inferior quality were substituted.

Calmly the cell-boss stood there smoking his pipe and looked on while this rapid costume changing was enacted. A young chap, with a vestige of decency left within him, remarked about the injustice of the theft, but he was cut short by the cell-boss who snarled at him, saying: "Guess it ain't too late yet to hold another Kangaroo Court and have a certain 'smarty' learn how to mind his own business. I'm

boss here; do you get me? Besides, this gink won't know where he traded clothes. So dry up, 'fore I have about twenty-five paddles imposed upon you."

The following morning Jere and nine other fellows who had been committed to jail the day before were handcuffed together, two by two; a heavy chain was attached to their bracelets; and, like a bunch of cattle, they were taken over to the police station. Arriving there they were lined up against the wall of the general assembly room of the city detectives. The sleuths then filed in to subject the prisoners to a thorough scrutiny and inspection; this, called "running the gauntlet," was done for the purpose of giving the detective department a chance to see if among the captured characters perhaps there might be some wanted for an additional charge, either in this city or another. The officer who had charge of this daily routine performance of examination of prisoners at once recognized Jere, who gave him a knowing look; and because of their former acquaintance at the convention ball, the youthful pickpocket was excused from this ordeal and allowed to remain in the corridor of the police-station, while the remainder were put to a most grilling examination.

The night before, George and Sanderson had met at Dinty's emporium, as was their usual custom, provided Fred was in the city. Sanderson was informed of Jere's arrest, but he only smiled cynically and said: "I know all about it, George; never mind; this little experience won't hurt him at all. It will teach him to be more careful in the future in making his get-a-way." Raising his glass to his lips he

rapidly drained it; then said, "Just remain here until I return," and quickly he left the saloon. In about twenty minutes he came back, and when he had sat down he drew from his pocket a medicine dropper and a one dram vial which seemed to be filled with clear water.

"This little bit of fluid with the assistance of our old friend David Jacobs will readily liberate our boy, Jere," he consolingly said to George.

Jacobs was a prominent criminal lawyer whose legal skill was never denied, but whose reputation was most unsavory.

"I don't doubt your word, Fred; Dave is a good fixer, but what on earth has the little bottle and the medicine dropper got to do with it?"

"Never mind about that, but take both, early in the morning, to Jere and tell him to follow explicitly the directions I will now give you.

"He must not be frightened and play the baby act; but he must do strictly as he is told; and, as a result, he will be free in a day or so without blemish.

The old man was extremely curious as to the contents of the bottle, and he wondered what this innocent looking fluid could have to do with Jere's release.

"Tell Jere to put one drop of this medicine in his eyes every hour until eight drops are used, and by that time he will have to have some one to lead him round. This temporary blindness will soon pass away and his eyes will be as good as before. The boy made a good haul, and a thousand dollars is not a bad job for just a youngster. I've just learned before

coming here from Lieutenant O'Leary, that the Bankers' Association is hot on Jere's trail and will try hard to give him a long sentence if they possibly can. The cashier was down at the jail early this evening and was almost certain that he identified our young pal. His hearing has been set for day after tomorrow morning, and this medicine will have had just time enough to do its work, if my advice and directions are followed implicitly."

"You're a corker, Fred; you always help a feller out when he's up against it, I'll do my part," George ardently replied.

After George left the jail, Jere went to his poorly lighted cell and sat down on the edge of his bunk, withdrawing from his pocket the wonder-working medicine and the dropper. He was just a little fearful about putting the solution in his eyes and he asked himself: "What if this should make me blind for keeps?" But a great fear of a long sentence in the penitentiary and the almost blind, implicit trust he put in Sanderson and George soon dissipated his doubts. Surreptitiously, when no one was looking, he placed in each eye a drop of the liberty-giving fluid. He felt no immediate change; his vision remained unimpaired. Within a half hour, however, he noticed that the objects of the jail corridor and the cell took upon themselves a hazy indistinctness. The features of his fellow prisoners became less plain. The light which fell through the dirty window of the bar-bound hall grew disagreeable and dazzling; with the second drop the symptoms increased. When he

involuntarily winked his eyes, which act he found himself doing very often, blinding flashes of light passed before him. He sought the darkness and shadow of his cell. Luminous, purple rings attached themselves to the ever-dimming outlines of the surroundings. The whole jail appeared to be in a state of twilight and the figures of the fellow prisoners became but shadowy indistinguishable silhouettes. And by the time of the administration of the fifth drop he found himself utterly unable to further continue his self-medication. An intense fear seized him.

"What if this dope is too strong for me?" he muttered to himself; "I'd rather do ten bits in the pen, than lose me glimmers." But summing up the last vestige of his limited courage he called for his cell-mate, the old man, who had treated him so generously the evening before. When the latter came to him Jere said:

"Say, old pal, I has awful bad eye trouble, sometimes, and it comes on me of a sudden; I got a touch of it this morning. I always carries some dope wid me to use when I has these spells. Take it out of my pocket and put a drop of the stuff in me eyes. These spells sometimes last two or three days, and I gets blind as a bat."

"It's too bad, Kid; " sympathizingly, the old man replied; and, with a hand unsteadied by dissipation, tremulously complied with Jere's request. When bed time came on Jere found himself almost totally unable to see. Yet it was still possible for him to distinguish faintly between light and darkness. He

tried to soften the fear and melancholy of the self-inflicted mydriasis of the atropine solution, which brought with it dismal gloom and blackness.

When his old partner had rolled on his hard cot, Jere sobbed softly to himself. The night was spent in troubled and fitful dreams, filled with phantoms of trials, inquisitions and imprisonment. When he awoke on the day set for his hearing he found himself still unable to see; and he stumbled about while dressing, which would have been well nigh impossible had it not been for the assistance of his cell-mate. The fear which had filled his heart the night before was gone. He seemed possessed with a spirit of unreasonable and daring recklessness. He felt certain that his blindness would pass, for had not his friend told him it would.

At nine o'clock when the police court convened Jere was escorted to the hearing by the deputy bailiff through the underground passage leading from the jail to the police station. After the first two cases had been disposed of, the police prosecutor called out: "Jere Patton!" whereupon the young crook was led before the judge, and the officer who made the arrest arose to testify against the prisoner. After a lengthy recital of the incident of the arrest, the officer was excused; but the relentless prosecutor addressed the judge as follows:

"Your Honor, this man has been identified by the cashier of the First National Bank as the person who robbed the bank of a bundle of bills, amounting to one thousand dollars."

The Judge then bade the cashier take the witness

stand and, after being sworn in, this bank official related the story of the robbery. When questioned if he could positively identify the defendant, the cashier replied:

"I am quite certain I can, your Honor."

"Is he in the court-room?" the Judge queried.

"Yes, there he stands," the witness answered pointing to Jere.

"That is all for the present," the Judge then stated.

The prosecutor directed Jere to get on the witness stand, but to the amazement of the entire court-room he was unable to do so, on account of his temporary, artificial blindness. At this psychological moment a very eccentric looking individual, whose aquiline nose and embryonic Vandyke gave him a Mephistophelian appearance, stepped before the railing of the platform whereon the Judge was seated. This interlocutor wore a shiny Prince Albert coat, a red, flashy necktie which slipped up behind his collar, the latter giving evidence of not having visited a laundry very recently.

He wore heavy rimmed glasses astride a prominent nose that at once betrayed his Hebraic lineage. His hands were grimy and soiled; unmanicured fingernails bore a rim of ebony; on his third finger was a large diamond ring which seemed sadly out of place. His dress and demeanor showed marked eccentricity, but his beady black eyes, which lay beneath heavy bushy eyebrows suggested cunning and keenness of intellect. With an obsequious bow to the Judge he began to address that august person in a shrill, nasal tone:

“ May it please your Honor, the good Judge of this court, if I represent this poor boy. I am perhaps more familiar with his lamentable history than any one in the city. He is deserving of your fullest sympathy, Your Honor, as I will endeavor to explain. Permit me, if you please, to give you, in exact technical terms, the facts covering this case. At childbirth he was afflicted with that cursed affection *ophthalmia neonatorum* which produced opacities of the cornea and as a result of this curse of infancy he has been stone blind all his life.”

After having displayed this bit of medical lore he stroked his beard, cautiously waiting for this statement to have its effect upon the Judge. As it seemed to be kindly received, he proceeded with his manufactured evidence. This barrister had the reputation of being able to secure — provided the proper retaining fee was in sight — any evidence, alibi or testimony that his client might need.

“ This poor child, your Honor, inherited a nervous affection from his mother and this has further increased his physical wretchedness. The crime of which this lad is accused, required the best of eyesight. The thief, — I hope he is caught, — had to find his way to the cashier’s window and skillfully steal the money in the manner so accurately described by the last witness.”

He further continued, “ To my mind it is unreasonable and absurd to believe that this unfortunate boy could possibly be guilty of the crime which he is alleged to have committed; for its execution would require the best of eyesight, as said before, and my

client is so blind that if you, at this moment, gave him his liberty he would not be able to find his way out of the court-room. You will perceive, sir, that any test for blindness may be applied to prove my statement," and, with these words, he made a motion as if to strike Jere in the face, but Jere remained perfectly impassive and apparently unconscious of what had happened. And at this juncture, to further impress his hearers and the Judge, David Jacobs lit several matches and flashed them before Jere's eyes; but the latter never winked an eyelid, but blankly stared into the flames.

"Now, your Honor," the lawyer resumed, "how can a person so blind as this steal a bunch of bank-notes before the face of the cashier; then successfully find his way out of the bank and deliberately lose himself in the vast throng of pedestrians who are traversing the streets in that busy business section of the city at the hour when the robbery was committed? I readily admit that this blind young man had the misfortune to accidentally bump into a policeman, who, by the way, should have been at his post of duty as a traffic officer at the intersection of the streets, and not on the sidewalk conversing with a lady friend. Your Honor, the situation is just this: the arrest of my client was purely an incident of which the officer should be ashamed. A robbery was committed at the bank, we all admit, but because the keen-eyed, fleet-footed robber made his get-away this poor fellow is taken for a scapegoat. For you know, your Honor, somebody had to be arrested in such a case; for the dignity of the police

department must be upheld; and you'll excuse me if I say so. The reward to be given by the Bankers' Association for the apprehension of the criminal is not without its charms.

At this point the prosecutor objected; but the objection was not sustained, and the legal Shylock continued:

"Since when do policemen try to make records for themselves by arresting blind people, innocent of crime, to parade them before the bar of justice because they cannot catch the fellows who really do the work?"

While making this statement he looked squarely at the big, burly officer whose stupid face had even turned a more brilliant turkey red than was its usual color.

"I would suggest that such record seeking officers direct their attention and over-zealous activities to the County Blind Asylum and make arrests by the wholesale in order to increase their reputation for efficiency, if it is so easy to fix a case upon an innocent blind man! Your Honor, it's a heaven-crying injustice, and pardon me my very personal reference, you who have so nobly filled the position on the bench of this court and are known throughout the city, yes, the county and the state, as the most just Judge ever incumbent in this place, will surely not now permit your grand and well-deserving record to become blighted by pronouncing this poor blind boy guilty of something it is utterly impossible for him to do. I trust, your Honor, the time has not arrived when cold-hearted corporations in clique with

conscienceless officers of the law will prey upon the blind to misapply justice. In consequence of this undeniable and undisputable proof I gave you a moment ago of Jere Patton's inability to do the wrong alleged to have been committed by him, I ask your Honor to discharge him as not guilty!" With a pathetic, imploring pose of outstretched hands towards the Judge, the unscrupulous lawyer concluded his address.

Silence prevailed for a moment, and even the ever-ready prosecuting attorney failed to rise in protest. Suddenly the Judge summoned Jere to stand in front of his desk. David Jacobs carefully and gently led the young defendant to the stand in the place designated. The Judge looked at Jere for a brief moment, finally reached for his pen, and, in a bold, quick hand wrote across the warrant, "DISCHARGED." — and then informed the smiling and bowing attorney to take his client away to freedom.

As Jere was led out of the court-room by his deliverer, he said with more gratitude in his heart than he had ever felt before:

"I'll pay you well for this!" to which Jacobs curtly replied: "You may rest assured that I have been already well paid, or I'd never have bothered myself about you."

CHAPTER IX

JENNIE'S PROTÉGÉ

Jennie's weekly visits to the slums led her to form an acquaintance with a boy about fifteen years of age. She was especially interested in him because of his affectionate but wayward disposition. His case afforded her an opportunity to try the real purpose of her work among the city's poor. On this visit, however, she missed him, but shortly learned the cause of his absence. He had been arrested on the same morning for robbing the cash register of a saloon, where he had been working for over two weeks, cleaning the cuspidors, scrubbing the floors and polishing the brass of the bar.

The bartender, who was always more or less in a state of semi-intoxication, repeatedly left the cash drawer open, thereby deliberately putting temptation in view of the youth. For his menial services the lad was to receive two dollars a week. When pay day arrived, instead of receiving this small pittance, Charlie was informed that his father had allowed the meager earnings to be credited to his bar-bill. This base trick angered and embittered the boy; suddenly a criminal instinct rose within him and the boy helped himself to the cash register, taking the amount of his pitiful wages. Within an hour he was placed under arrest and sent to jail to await trial.

When Miss Gerard learned what had happened

she forthwith went to Mr. Kennington's office to intercede in behalf of Charlie. In fairness to her, it must be mentioned that she felt some diffidence about visiting Kennington, even on a matter of business. She felt keenly hurt, and her pride was injured because Kennington had apparently ignored the communication which she had sent him, some time before. But her devotion to her work caused her to put in abeyance her personal feelings in the matter, and she entered the outer offices of the city attorney with eagerness.

Luckily for both, Kennington was not busy at that moment and, as she opened the door and came in, a thrill of extreme pleasure passed through him, as he anticipated a delightful visit. Kennington arose to shake hands with her and bade her sit down; she met his cordial advances, however, with a little more formality and reservation than she had shown when last she met him. Kennington was not slow to notice this difference in her demeanor, and vainly wondered why this should be so. With a tone in her voice that bespoke business only, she informed him of the purpose of her visit.

"I have come to see you about Charlie Quinlan, who was arrested this morning charged with robbing the till of the saloon where he was working. It is true he committed the crime and he does not deny it, but there are, to my mind, some mitigating and extenuating circumstances which the court, and you as prosecutor should know. Understand me; I have no desire to use any undue influence upon you or any one to assist my young friend — "

"Lucky chap, indeed, to have you as his defendant," Kennington warmly interpolated. Ignoring this remark, Miss Gerard continued:

"This boy's father a few years ago was badly injured in a rolling-mill, losing his right arm and a portion of his right foot. He was a laborer; and of course this dreadful calamity which had befallen him incapacitated him for further work at the plant. The very next day after his accident the company lawyer called on him at the hospital, and with a wordy show of friendliness beguiled this unfortunate man into signing a paper; in exchange for which, he handed the cripple a paltry sum, saying as he did so: "This will bridge you over your wants, temporarily." Little did Mr. Quinlan realize that by accepting this beggarly settlement, and affixing his signature to the carefully worded document that he cut off every possible chance for further financial redress.

"The necessities of this man's family soon devoured the little money received, and when Charlie's father recovered from the accident he then fully realized the trick which had been played upon him. From that time on he became morose, cynical and even anarchistic in his feelings towards society, especially corporations and persons of wealth.

"His physical infirmities, burdened with the cynicism of his character, made it almost impossible for him to secure any employment which paid wages sufficient to provide for himself and family. The proverbial wolf of poverty ever prowled at the door of his miserable home, and the occasional advent of a new mouth to feed and a body to clothe caused this

man to grow hopelessly indifferent as to the method used to provide for the flock depending on him for support. The consequences being, that crime soon lured him to follow her footsteps, and a perverted interpretation of the universally adopted maxim: 'Self-preservation is nature's first law,' induced him to help himself to the property of others indiscriminately, entirely disregarding the eighth commandment. It is little wonder, then, that Charlie reared in such a stifling moral atmosphere, his childish mind fed upon anarchisms, became little by little an apt and adept follower. And just as the fledglings of the plains and the forests pursue the same course their parent birds have taken, so too this lad, in his tender, plastic years, has started to travel the pathway his father has blazoned for him. From his teachers I learned that while irregularly attending school he began to practice small thieveries."

Interestedly Kennington followed her graphic recital and answered:

"Yes, this is a very sad but true story, and I am beginning to see that our present system of dealing with young delinquents is far from what it should be."

Jennie then asked, "Mr. Prosecutor, will it not be possible for you to see, if this boy must be tried, that I may be appointed as his probationary officer; and I can assure you that I will be personally responsible for him."

"Of course, Miss Gerard, I will be delighted to do anything I can for you —" whereupon she interrupted, "I'm not asking for any favor for myself, but I am here solely in the interest of Charlie."

“ Well, I realize that; but I would like for you to give me some more of your views on the subject of dealing with criminals, young or old; for I’ve always heretofore dealt with crime from the standpoint of the law only. I will agree with you that Charlie should not be treated as a hardened criminal; but we should not fail to understand that he should be treated as a delinquent child at least. We cannot reform bad boys by petting and coddling them or feeding them on sweetmeats. If the rod were not spared so much now-a-days there would not be so many spoiled children.”

“ Yes,” she curtly interrupted again, “ Mr. Advocate of the Lex Talionis, but who was to administer parental discipline in this case, I’d like to know? No one at all.”

Kennington answered, “ I’ll admit that so far as this case is concerned there was no one. But on the other hand, if the boys fail to receive the proper parental care they must be dealt with as we find them. For instance, the tough gangs of our city streets should be suppressed by the police, and I have endeavored to bring about this reform in police control; but up to the present time I must admit I have not succeeded in doing very much. These street gangs are regular hatcheries and schools for criminals; and as long as these vicious cliques are permitted to exist in their lawlessness, the youths of our city will be led into crime, which in time will take them to prison.”

“ True enough, Mr. Kennington,” Jennie retorted. “ I find this to be so when following my settlement work, but, on the other hand, crime will not be sup-

pressed no matter how harsh the penalties may be. You jurists will fail so long as you continue studying books instead of men, searching in ponderous volumes for citations, resurrecting, as it were, decisions from legal graveyards. You cannot judge crime that springs from disorders of the mind or from perverse social conditions by measuring it with these time-worn and moth-eaten precedents of the dead past."

Kennington affirmed, "What you say is partially correct; the law must be fixed and supported by traditions; not subject to change by the whims and fancy of the theorists who would absolutely unsettle our jurisprudence. The criminal must be suppressed.

"But your legal doctrine of *Lex Talionis* is an unproductive one; a measure of punishment cannot balance or remedy an act of crime. The futility of this method has long been demonstrated as ineffective for the reduction of crime to the slightest degree. You spoke of endeavoring to suppress the gathering of the street gangs and toughs; why don't you go to the bottom of their origin, — the community saloon? On the three corners, where the streets intersect, near Charlie's home, stand saloons, casting their evil, ominous shadows, as it were, upon the lives of the tenement dwellers of that section of the city. They are entirely out of place, if a saloon is ever in place in a residence community. To the serious and earnest student of sociological problems will come the question: how can these tenement folks who have hardly enough wherewith to clothe and feed themselves and to provide for shelter against the in-

clemencies of the elements, have money left for something which is an absolute luxury, and in fact an evil? It does appear paradoxical that any one should be able to make a living,—and a good one at that, as many of these saloon-keepers do — from people who themselves have naught whereon to live. But this seems to be the exact curse of the community saloon. It is like a huge suction tube, ever ready to draw toward it the pitiful earnings of the husbands and fathers of the tenement district, starving thereby the wives and children. Not only that, these saloons are institutions of criminality, veritable factories of criminals; here they are made, stamped and patented, as it were, and as honest manufacturers stand by and protect their patents, these vicious productions of the saloon are protected also. The criminals created by them congregate in them, laying future plots; these gangsters and street toughs concoct all sorts of schemes which they carry out with a heartlessness akin to none; and then they justify their criminals' activities by claiming that the world owes them a living. The very vitality of the youths is being sucked out, vampire-like in these obnoxious dives. Inebriety stultifies and dulls the brain of the young men, and under the baneful influence of rank liquors their consciences become obsolete mentors. Vice is raised upon the pedestal virtue once occupied, and the crook is regarded as a hero. But not only upon the male population does this modern Moloch make his demands for his bestial appetite, for young women are allured into these dens of iniquity also. All this goes on unpunished, aye, even in a measure

protected by the laws of the city, county and state. Because for the exchange of a stipulated sum of money, tainted by the wailings of famished children, the moans of heart-broken wives and mothers and, last but not least, the curses of the dying derelicts, the saloonist annually gets his license which gives him the permission and right to carry on his nefarious traffic upon the bodies and souls of his fellow men. Law, or those who should enforce it, wink an eye at this great dragon of the present times —why? Because the revenue accruing from this source is providing the coffers with the necessary funds from which the law makers and enforcers draw their fat salaries. A plain case of one crow not wishing to pick out another crow's eyes. Iniquity goes on, and our youths, both male and female, go down to perdition in these congested communities, practically as fast as they are born.

Kennington was much amazed at her conception of the criminal problem and warmly stated: "You should have been a barrister; you are an incarnate Portia!"

Miss Gerard slightly flushed with displeasure as she thought Kennington was ridiculing her.

"Lawyer-like, you resort to ridicule when you are lacking in reasonable argument." There was a slight tinge of resentment, born of sensitiveness, in her voice.

Kennington made haste to explain his remark by saying: "Be it far from me to make sport of you or any of your statements. I fully meant what I said. The professions are open to both sexes and many

are being nobly filled by women, and you would make a valuable addition to the profession of law. I'd be more than happy to have you for my partner."

This last remark he added with a double meaning. Adroitly he had prolonged the conversation for the sole purpose of having her remain longer in his office.

"That is nice of you to say as much," was the reply; "but I do not know that you would make a reliable partner since you pay so little attention to your correspondence."

Kennington stared blankly at her and finally said: "What do you mean?"

"Simply this; I sent you a letter two weeks ago concerning an important matter, and you failed to even acknowledge the receipt of it. Such demeanor would hardly inspire confidence in one to take you in as a partner, don't you think so?" Her eyes were wistful.

Kennington emphatically replied, "I did not receive any message from you; and rest assured had I been so fortunate you would have received an immediate reply; as you must know that I would do anything for y —"

"Well, it doesn't matter now either way," Jennie quickly interposed, lightly cutting short Kennington's ready declaration of his affection for her. Kennington was very anxious to know what the contents of that letter might have been, but Miss Gerard's reserved demeanor precluded any possible inquiry.

The following morning when Charlie Quinlan was arraigned in court, Kennington arose and asked the

Judge to suspend sentence upon the boy; and to have Miss Jennie Gerard appointed as his probationary officer. Kennington in a few words told the Court of Miss Gerard's excellent work in the slums, and said that no one was more qualified to take care of the lad. The papers were then made out by the clerk. These she signed and then took her protégé with her out of the court-room.

CHAPTER X

ASSAULT ON KENNINGTON

The same afternoon Miss Gerard secured a position for Charlie as an assistant wrapper in the shipping rooms of one of the wholesale jobber's houses; and, having admonished and encouraged him to do the square thing, she drove at once to her father's office down town.

Her heart was filled with many misgivings, doubts and fears. Why had not Kennington received the letter which she entrusted to her father to deliver? Could there be some ulterior motive in his mind? But this disagreeable thought was softened by the idea that her father, during the press of his business affairs, had forgotten to deliver the message. It was not unreasonable to suppose that by some chance he had even failed to go to Kennington's office on that day. But whatever the reason for this neglect it temporarily modified her feelings toward Kennington somewhat. She had judged him harshly and hastily; now she felt repentant; and she considered it her duty to ask her father about the letter.

She found him seated at his desk smoking in a nervous, uneasy manner. He excitedly twisted a paper-cutter in his fingers, and the point of the instrument bored small disfiguring holes in the top of his beautiful desk. His countenance was paler than usual. The crowsfeet about his eyes and the wrin-

kles on his forehead stood out perceptibly; he seemed to be agitated and depressed; and, in a manner quite different from his usual vivacity, he called for his daughter to step into his consultation room as she entered the outer office.

"What is it, Jennie, that I can do for you?" he bluntly asked.

"Father, why did you not deliver the letter to Mr. Kennington as you promised to do?"

"Well, eh-eh."

"I was dreadfully embarrassed today when I was in Mr. Kennington's office."

"It's too bad, Jennie; but why have you been to his office again? What business can you possibly have to take you there? Folks will soon be talking about it."

"Well, what if they do? My acts will always bear inspection; my social settlement duties took me there and I'll go where they take me as long as I am engaged in this sort of work. Of course my philanthropic efforts in these sociological affairs do not interest the social gad-grinds, except to furnish them with subjects for gossip and chatter. But to come back, I had judged Mr. Kennington wrongly and now I have learned that it was not his fault at all. Why were you so forgetful?"

"Don't bother about trifles, Jennie, don't be foolish; what if I did forget? No harm was done. I was a fool for ever promising that I'd take the letter to him, knowing what kind of a rascal he is."

"Father, tell me, why do you abuse Mr. Kennington so?"

“Yes, and why do you defend him? You remember that unpleasant evening we spent some time ago discussing this fellow, and why do you renew this unhappy topic again? I have enough business engrossing my mind without taking up time in conversation concerning him. Every day I am learning more new things about him, that absolutely prove that he is totally lacking in any qualities that would make him deserving of even our slightest acquaintance. And, I dare say, before a week is past you will be extremely glad that I forgot to deliver your billet-doux to him. It grieves me to say these unpleasant things, but I know them to be positive truths. Run along, dear; tell mother I’ll be home for dinner at six. Then tonight we’ll all go to the theater to take in the opera, ‘Il Trovatore,’ which will be a change from the unpleasant things in your settlement work.”

Out of deference to her father’s wishes and not desirous of repeating the painful interview of little over a week ago, she went away unsatisfied and much disturbed over the whole affair.

During the week following Jennie’s visit to his office, Kennington had the satisfaction to see that his work of freeing the city from the clutch of the grafters was succeeding, in spite of all opposition, open and covert, ominous threats and secret attempts at blackmail. He even knew that Gerard, father of the girl he secretly loved and to whom he would declare his love when time was propitious, was co-operating with his enemies. He had, so far, been unable to secure any tangible evidence against

the "boss of the 13th," but he was satisfied that some incriminating circumstances concerning Gerard would present themselves in the process of his metropolitan house-cleaning.

There was the rub. He loved the girl, and the girl loved her father. Could she love the man who would disgrace her parent? But he never hesitated one instant in searching for evidence that he absolutely knew would enmesh Gerard and probably bring him face to face with the doors of the penitentiary.

The next week, much to the dismay of the administration and to the gratification of the decent people of the city, two police captains had been indicted for accepting bribes from a disreputable class. The public conscience was awakening and stirring itself from the moral lethargy that had long bound it. Popular opinion was coming to the aid of Kennington's efforts, and it assumed gigantic proportions. The Mayor and his council and the heads of the departments of the city government were fearfully distressed and uneasy. The exposed police officers, who were kept in jail without bail, could almost imagine themselves already in prison. Gerard also shared in this state of fearful apprehension and anxiety. The tiny rivulet of reform that Kennington had started was pursuing the relentless course of a wild rushing torrent, sweeping all opposition before it as if it were mere straw. Gerard tried to assume an air of indifference, and even bravado. But those who knew him well easily pierced this insignificant mask that failed to hide the active actual fear and terror that were gnawing at his mind and conscience.

This exposure of wickedness in high places he knew would finally engulf him. It meant disaster and ruin; he was growing desperate for his own sake and for the social standing of his wife and daughter. The "persecutions" of this fanatical prosecutor had to be stopped. He had selected Kennington for the office of city attorney; it was all his fault that this fateful catastrophe was about to befall him and his cohorts. Since he was responsible, he must do something; and do it quickly. . . .

A few evenings later Lieut. O'Leary, dressed in plain clothes, paid a visit to Dinty's saloon. As usual, George and Jere were there, seated at one of the tables, engrossed in flippant conversation, so that they did not notice the police officer when he entered, especially since he was clad in other than official uniform. O'Leary ordered a glass of beer, and while slowly drinking the foaming beverage he let his lynx eyes stealthily take in the minutest detail of the place and its frequenters. Keenly did he watch Jere's reflection in the bar mirror, and after a few moments of observation and deliberation he beckoned the waiter to come to him, and in an undertone said:

"Say, Bill, tell that kid with the brown suit and golf cap on, to come over here; I want to talk to him."

"All right, Cap.," the obsequious menial replied, and hastened to do as bidden. Jere at once complied with the request, wondering who it could be that wished to see him. When approaching the officer he smiled in recognition and asked, "What's up now, Lieutenant?" His guilty conscience not

being quite at ease, lest some of his many misdeeds might have found him out and the officer had come to warn him.

"Oh, nothing much, have something;" and with a nod to the ever-ready-to-serve bartender he added: "give him what he wants."

Jere was not slow in naming his favorite brand of liquor. O'Leary waited until the youth had imbibed the whiskey and then giving the bartender a knowing look, he said: "Come, let's go into the rear bar and have a private chat."

Jere followed dumfounded and yet not fully at ease, though the officer had assured him that nothing was wrong.

They remained in this "blind tiger" abode twenty minutes or more and then stepped back into the main bar-room. Jere's face was flushed with excitement and an unusual ominous light emanated from his cat-like eyes. O'Leary ordered a round of drinks for the two friends and himself; and patted George on the back in a friendly manner, while he said to Jere: "Don't forget, Kid, tomorrow night!" The officer left well satisfied with himself and his mission. At the next pay station he slipped into the telephone booth and called up Gerard. The latter answering the phone was gratified to recognize his devotee's voice and to hear: "It's all fixed up for tomorrow night, Joe; count on me to arrange things."

"Good for you, Michael!" Gerard chucklingly replied.

The next day Kennington was surprised to receive a telephone message from a woman who was a house-

holder in a disreputable district. She explained her unprecedented action by saying: "I see by the papers, and I know from experience, Mr. Kennington, that you are making a crusade upon the grafters and also upon those who are trying to get along as best they can. Well, I won't argue with you as to the latter subject, but if you really want first-hand information about bribery and extortion as practiced by your police department and others away up in politics, come and see me and I'll give you facts which I know you will be very glad to have."

It must be said to Kennington's credit that he did not relish the idea of going down into the immoral infernoes of the city, but information he desired; and since his assistants were loathe to furnish the same for him, he believed that he had no alternative. He courteously replied to this offer and said that he would call on her that same evening about eight o'clock.

By what stroke of fate it was, that this woman was led to act with duplicity was, at first sight, hard to tell. It may be that she saw in Kennington an enemy and a dangerous factor to destroy her questionable methods of making a livelihood; and hence, from a spirit of selfishness and self-preservation of personal rights, she called up Gerard who, by the way, was her landlord, a veritable Shylock at that. Gerard picked up the receiver and bellowed into it, "Hello, who's this?"

"Now, don't get peeved, Joseph," the woman familiarly purred in response; "this is May talking; the prosecutor, Mr. Kennington, just got through

telephoning to me that he would come down to my place tonight and gather facts about the high rent and the taking of weekly collections, which you fellows make. I thought you might be interested to know this," she added with a faint imitation of a gurgling laughter. Had Gerard seen the speaker's face at that instant, the laugh would not have sounded so pleasant.

"All right, May, thank you for telling me, although I don't give a d—— what that bloodhound of a prosecutor does, he can't hurt me." This last remark was meant more for his own consolation than for the ears of the woman.

"Say, May," he quickly continued, "when that low-bred sneak comes to your place tonight be as friendly to him as you can; and while talking let the maid come in and pretend to fix the window shade; but in reality let her give it a pull so it will fly up. Do this at eight-thirty sharp —"

"What's that for?" the woman interrupted.

"Well, by ——, can't you wait till I get through talking?" Gerard bawled back. "I want to show him up. I want some one who thinks he is just about it, to see him in your place, Do you get me?"

"Oh, yes, I do; I guess it is one of your secret flames who thinks Kennington looks better to her than you do," the woman sneeringly rejoined.

"Cut out that stage stuff, May; it doesn't need make any difference to you who the party is. Do what I tell you, and you'd better, too," he threateningly concluded.

With a sinister smile on her face which resembled

a crater of burnt-out passions she responded in fine: "All right, Joseph, I'll do as you wish; but don't think you bullied me into it. I'm past that now; every dog has his day and the underdog once in a while gets on top, too. So long," she flippantly cut off the conversation by hanging up the receiver.

Beads of cold sweat suddenly burst out on Gerard's forehead and his bovine eyes anxiously surveyed the walls of his elegant office.

"What did that confounded wench mean by that last remark, anyway? There's something in the wind! Oh, blame it all. I'm not going to lose courage just on the eve of winning out." Looking at his watch he muttered half audibly: "But six hours more, my ambitious young cock, and you'll crow no more; I almost feel tempted to send flowers to your fune —," a noise in the outer room caused him to break off his gruesome soliloquy.—

When Kennington had finished his evening meal and hurriedly glanced over the last issue of the paper he went out into the night on his disagreeable, compulsory visit to the tenderloin district. While riding in the street-car the contrast of the two worlds, so to say, in the city, was forcibly brought before his mind. As he was riding along he passed beautiful homes of happiness and moral integrity; healthy, care-free children were to be seen playing together or eagerly listening to the recital of some interesting story told either by a loving father or mother. Peace, contentment, happiness and sobriety appeared to be the guardian angels of these cheerful abodes.

In a short while he entered a section of the city where everything was dark and gloomy; no bright lights were in the windows. Only here and there were hanging over the doorway lurid red lights, illuminating the assumed name of a proprietress of a den of vice. The windows were all heavily shaded; not a sign of life was visible. Finally he came to the number he was looking for and briskly he ascended the few steps leading to the door. After ringing the bell he was ushered in by a colored maid who eyed him quite boldly; for this servant at once saw that Kennington was not of the ordinary type of visitors frequenting this place. He was shown in the front parlor and after having informed the maid that his business was solely with the madam, he was told to wait. Soon a woman just past middle age, of rather portly stature entered, dressed in a tawdry purple evening gown, with a long train attached to it. She was of medium height; her coiffure carefully gotten up, was adorned with a large pale yellow tea rose. Despite the fact she tried to shake off the idea and appearance that she no longer was the possessor of her former youthful charms of years gone by, gray strands of hair were visible about her temples.

"Ah, Mr. Kennington, I believe," she softly stated extending her more plump than shapely hand.

"I am glad you came; I've been wanting to meet you for ever so long." This was spoken with a slight, coquettish glance at the young man. Kennington was at a loss how to reply, for he was well aware that all this small talk was only stereotype; and, no

doubt, was unmeaningly used to every visitor of the net of this human spider.

May Carleton, under which cognomen she was known to the underworld, at once perceived that her alluring artifice would fall short of its mark. Kennington precluded further expressions of nonentities by saying: "In accordance with your telephone message this afternoon I came to learn what information you can give me which will assist me in the social reform I am leading against the element which is in bitter opposition to law and order."

"Yes, Mr. Prosecutor, I am quite interested from purely selfish motives; I have been following your vigorous and relentless campaign of the last few months, and, as I stated this afternoon over the wire, you are an enemy of mine, too. Well, every one is entitled to his individual opinion and I'm not going to attempt to make you a convert to my views, which I think I would have a hard time doing," she smilingly remarked. "But, "as I promised, I will give you facts, Mr. Kennington. A saturnine look flitted over her face for a moment and then she said: "Come on, let us sit on this divan; you're not afraid, are you, — it's a long story, but it must all be told that you may fully understand the entire situation, and mine especially," she concluded, with an attempt at sadness.

With diffidence Kennington followed her invitation to sit beside her on the luxurious divan, — just for two — for he did not wish to offend the woman, even though she did belong to an infamous class of moral lepers. Just at that moment the maid came

in and asked the madam something regarding an order for liquid refreshments to be served in an adjoining parlor; and then, inadvertently, the colored girl stepped to the window, ostensibly trying to arrange the curtains, when suddenly the shade shot upwards. Kennington, in the innocence of his mission, was not in the least alarmed by the happening, but the madam gave a little startled cry and impulsively laid her hand on Kennington's shoulder and let it rest there till the curtain was restored to its former position. Little did Kennington think that the tableau, of which he was an unwitting performer, was viewed by the girl he loved dearer than anything in the world, causing her heart untold grief and agony.

"Pardon the liberty I took just a moment ago," the woman began, "but I was so frightened by the accident the maid had with the curtain that I forgot myself; but, let me tell you my life's history, Mr. Kennington. It is necessary that I do so in order for you to get a clear insight into this world of ours so different from yours. I'll not tire you, I assure you," and before he could answer she began:

"I was born and raised in the country; I came from good parentage; my people were honest but poor. The little farm which my dear old dad tried so hard to coax into yielding an income to keep his family, stubbornly refused to respond to his efforts. The result was, as we children grew up to the age where we might be able to earn our own living, we were sent out into the world with only a fervent 'God Bless You!' I came to this city to work as

second maid in one of the fashionable families here. At first all went well and I was quite happy. The city life, with its multitude of diversions and fascinations was entirely new to me. When the college season came to an end the only son of the family, where I was working, arrived at home, and, at once to my discomfort and displeasure, he paid open court to me. His mother soon saw her son's infatuation and, instead of telling him what to do, she blamed me for trying to catch her boy, and summarily dismissed me. What little I had saved up soon went, and I was quite at a loss to know what next to do. Mrs. Pierce would not give me any recommendation, and then I was utterly helpless. When I had spent my last dime for a noon-day lunch in one of the cheap restaurants my eyes fell upon the "ad" column of the newspaper lying on the table next to me. I picked it up and eagerly scanned the page; nothing suitable was to be found save one advertisement. I finally, with great hesitancy, left the place to answer the demand for one or two young girls of comely shape and looks to act as substitutes in a chorus company, called "The Follies of Gotham." The manager treated me very kindly and said he would give me a chance, and so I was employed. You'll pardon me if I say this; in those days I had some beauty and a fairly good voice; I was very apt to pick up the rôles given me. Dancing had always been my delight and so I soon learned all those fancy steps which were required of me. I'll pass over the various experiences I was fated to go through and come to the point. One

evening, after the show, the manager brought a young fellow behind the stage whom he introduced as his personal friend, who had expressed his desire to see "Florentine," which was my stage name. In my foolish, youthful vanity I felt flattered that I should be picked out from the rest of the girls who had been much longer on the stage; and a feeling of dare-devilishness overtook me; especially when I perceived that some of the others were casting side-long glances at my new admirer. You can imagine the rest; fully bent upon innocent sport only, I accepted this man's invitation to dine with him, and the first few times he treated me as a perfect gentleman should. But I guess that is the way of man with a maid. Soon I really began to learn to love this man, and his flatteries were sweet music to my foolish ears, mistaking them, as I did, for sincere expressions of pure love. Love? Mr. Kennington, I've learned to despise that word; it is a misnomer, a falsehood, a chimera, an impossibility."

At this point the woman became excited; but noticing Kennington's discomfiture, she hastened to say: "I sincerely beg your pardon for growing so tragic; but you can't feel as a woman does about things. To continue, Mr. Gerard —"

"Gerard, you say?" Kennington exclaimed.

"Yes, Gerard. It is for you now to calm yourself and listen to the rest."

"I will indeed, Madam, I am more than interested," Kennington almost apologetically replied.

"Well, Joseph Gerard told me that he loved me and wanted to marry me, but that he could not do

so now on account of an uncle who was about to die and was intending to make him his sole heir; and for that reason Gerard did not dare to offend the old man by marrying any one but a girl from the upper four hundred. So we cooed and billed on, waiting for uncle to die. Love is blind; I presume that is why it so often falls and shatters to pieces. I dearly loved Joseph and in a weak moment yielded to his ardent pleadings to become his common law wife till his relative had passed away and he then could publicly acknowledge me as his own. Those were joyous days! At evening I put all my soul into my work, playing for my so-called husband, who occupied a box next to the stage. He showered flowers upon me and I became quite popular with the audience. But, — ah, if our language were made up without the two little, yet, oh! so weighty words, ‘But and if’ this would perhaps be a happier world. Gerard soon tired of me, and as quickly as he had picked me up, he dropped me. I was too proud to go down on my knees before him and I became hardened, and have been so ever since. Through his infamy I lost my position and then, what was left? Hard work I was not able to do. The past two years of comparative luxury and ease which I had learned to enjoy robbed me of my strength. There was nothing left at which to make a living; thus, like so many before me have done, I chose the easiest way. I know you don’t approve of it; I did not at first, but I’ve become case hardened, and have come to believe that this life is one continuous struggle to get the best of the next person, and so I’ve been following the

plan of catering to man's depravity. Fate decreed that Gerard, whom I hate from the bottom of my soul, should become my landlord; no other suitable locality being available for my business. And, think of it, the very hound that ruined me and my life is now drawing large sums of rent from the erstwhile victim of his depraved nature! Is this not a most striking example of the irony of fate? But, Mr. Kennington, I am on the eve of my revenge; and I shall most relentlessly go on with it. I'll be willing to testify on oath in court that Gerard, for the past eighteen years, has owned all these houses from number 412 to 420; five houses all told, and has extorted blood money for rents; and not only that, but through heartless men, like himself, has innocent girls sent down here. Oh, he is smart; he does not collect the rent himself; but his agents do. Then once in a while the police come around and demand an exorbitant fee for hush-money and safety against raids."

At this juncture the maid stepped in and said, "Officer to see you, Ma'am."

In a low whisper the woman said to Kennington, "Excuse me a moment, please."

Kennington's interest was keyed to the highest pitch. He felt a great feeling of pity for the poor woman who had just bared her both shameful and pitiful life's history to him. Soon he heard the angry voice of the officer exclaim, "Well, you know what's what, May, if you don't come through with the coin, Gerard will either raise your rent or let the police raid you, and you know that the prosecutor will raise
_____."

The woman was then heard to say, "Wait a minute, I'll be right back." Quickly she came to Kennington and stated, "What shall I do? O'Leary wants one hundred dollars and I can ill afford it; only last week I gave him seventy-five."

Silently Kennington reached into his inner pocket and from the wallet he extracted a new one hundred dollar bill, which he carefully marked and gave to the astounded woman.

"Take this, pay him and send him on his way."

When she turned her back to go to the officer, Kennington tiptoed to a position behind the curtain, drawing it aside from the door casing, sufficiently to peep through, witnessed the whole transaction. When it was done the woman returned and with a long searching look at Kennington's countenance wreathed in deep thought, she said: "Why did you do that? I am nothing to you. I belong to the despised of the world's society. And with a passionate sob she covered her face with her hands. Kennington arose and very tactfully said: "Madam, I am your debtor for what you have divulged to me this evening, and don't let this sum I've handed you, worry you. The information I have secured is very valuable. Eventually your present practice of procuring a living will be forbidden and cut off; do not lose heart, it is never too late to turn back and go in another direction. Rest assured that I for one will do all I can do to help you get right; but you must be willing to do so unreservedly, and cut all ties which would drag you back."

Silently the woman shook hands with him; and,

contrary to her usual custom, escorted him to the door and let him out into the street. When Kennington had gone she returned to the room where they had been sitting. A terrible look of hatred and revenge distorted her features. "Joseph Gerard, at last I am revenged," she breathed.

Then feminine-like, she gave vent to her long pent-up feelings of emotion and sank back upon the divan softly crying to herself, saying repeatedly: "Why could I not have met a real man like this Mr. Kennington, instead of that fiend, Gerard?"—

Earlier in the day, having received the message over the telephone from May Carleton, Gerard at once got in communication with Lieut. O'Leary at police headquarters.

"Here's our opportunity; our young apostate is going to pay a social visit to May Carleton this evening. Here's your chance; do not let it slip by!" Having concluded this brief conversation he also called up his daughter and said to her: "Jennie, though it is extremely painful to me and may likewise hurt your feelings, yet I am duty bound, as your parent, for your future welfare and happiness to take you for a little ride into the degraded portion of the city tonight."

"Why, father, how could such a journey be of the least benefit to me? If there is some one whom I could help down there, of course, I'll be glad to go."—

The old man chuckled to himself diabolically that evening as he and his daughter entered their car and drove away. Within a short while they passed from the rows of beautiful houses in the residential

district down into the region of the underworld, where, in the poorly lighted street, skulked the shadowy figures of human beings as they slipped in and out of familiar haunts. Shortly the machine was driven up to the curbstone opposite May Carleton's den of infamy. Gerard at once ordered his chauffeur to put out the lights and, turning to Jennie, whispered: "Keep your eyes open, daughter, and perhaps you'll see something that may be of greatest importance to you."

They sat in perfect silence for a minute or two. To Miss Gerard that period of waiting seemed like ages. Occasionally she could indistinctly hear coarse voices, mingled with shrieks and spasms of hilarity coming from female throats. There was a clatter of feet, suggestive of dancing, and strains of syncopated music grated harshly on her ears, accustomed to and fond of classic music only. Half angrily she mused to herself, "For what possible reason can father want me here?"

No sooner had this thought passed through her mind than she was given a great start. She perceived Kennington through the lighted window where a curtain had suddenly been drawn, conversing in his pleasant, friendly manner with one whose face, even at the distance, bore the marks of vice and dissipation. As she gazed in silent, painful horror, this creature of the demi-monde boldly patted Kennington upon the shoulder. Gerard triumphantly exclaimed, "See for your self, dear, what kind of a fellow your self-created hero is! Now you know why I hate him."

With a stifled sob she replied, "Take me home; I have nothing to say." On the way back Gerard spoke to the silent girl at his side, "I have always had a wholesome dislike for would-be reformers. This one is a splendid example of that caliber of people; he is a model of virtue by day and another man by night. It's too bad I did not discover this double-dealing character of his when first I met him."

To all this tirade Jennie made no reply. She was very glad that it was night, and dark; for had he been able to observe, he might have seen that her face was alternately blanched and suffused with scarlet. Dejectedly she thought of Kennington whom she had raised, in spite of her father's bitter accusations, upon a high pedestal of honor, regarding him as a paragon of manhood. How could he appear to be so interested in the uplift of humanity and at the same time be a habitu   of such a place? Her idol seemed shattered; and yet, in her almost broken-hearted despair and wounded pride, her intuition seemed vaguely to tell her that there was some mystery about the whole affair which time alone would make clear. Little did she dream as she was being driven home by her rascally father, that the man whom she loved, but whose character and reputation was now clouded by circumstantial evidence, was lying insensible in a pool of blood on the sidewalk, stealthily shot by the cowardly hand of a would-be assassin, hired by her own father and Lieut. O'Leary.

CHAPTER XI

THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

When Kennington regained consciousness he found himself in a snowy white bed in a dimly lighted room at St. Mark's Hospital. He felt considerable pain in his left limb, and he was unable to move that injured member which had been bound in a case-ment of gauze and bandages. The whole situation was indistinct and vague to his bewildered mind.

While he was endeavoring to rise, a nurse arose from a chair at the head of his bed and, perceiving that he was awake, she said: "Keep quiet, Mr. Kennington, everything is all right," to which he answered feebly. "If it is so, why am I here?"

She made no reply, but by putting a finger to her lips indicated that he must be silent, then dimmed the light and quietly left the room. In the morning, when he awoke, the sun was brightly streaming into his window, and the hands of the little china clock at his bedside table were pointing to the hour of nine. While he was musing to himself, trying to solve the mystery, the house physician came in, clad in a white linen uniform. "I am glad to see you doing so well, Mr. Kennington," he said brightly.

"Good morning, doctor, I know I am in good hands; but will you please tell me the meaning of all this; and what is the matter with my leg?"

“Oh, nothing serious so far as getting well is concerned. Some cowardly gunman shot you in the fleshy part of the thigh last night, while you were walking down the street. The bullet made a nasty, ragged wound in the muscles, and you fainted from the pain and loss of blood. You were found unconscious by some passer-by, who telephoned to the hospital, and then you were promptly brought in. The injury is not serious; but it will keep you here, no doubt, for about two weeks.”

“Two weeks? That is a terribly long while, doctor, and I have so much to do at present.”

“Yes, I know that; but you cannot go until you are well.”

Kennington felt extremely impatient and angered that he should have to be in retirement just when his battle for reform was growing exciting and interesting; but with the wisdom of a philosopher, he gently settled himself back among his pillows determined to make the best of his compulsory retreat.

The early morning papers announced across their front pages in glaring latters:

THE CITY PROSECUTOR SHOT BY A WOULD-BE
ASSASSIN! CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE
EXTRAORDINARY SHOOTING ENSHROUDED
WITH CONSIDERABLE MYSTERY! THE
MURDEROUS ATTEMPT WAS MADE
IN THE TENDERLOIN DISTRICT
OF THE CITY! GOSSIP
AND RUMOR ARE
RIFE'

To Kennington's window, on the third floor, there rose the lusty cries of the newsboys who kept continually shouting:

"Huxtry! Huxtry! All about the big shootin'."

Almost impatiently he pressed the button of his call-bell at the head of his bed, and in a moment or two the nurse appeared.

"Will you please get me a morning paper, at once?"

"I will if the doctor approves of it."

"Never mind the doctor!" he petulantly replied.

"Very well; I will get you one with the doctor's permission."

In a few minutes she returned with the morning sheet, and said as she handed it to him; "Here, but do not fret yourself about this affair at all; or else you'll make your wound worse and delay recovery."

With eager hastiness Kennington's eyes devoured the headlines; but when he came to the part suggesting that unpleasant rumors were abroad, as to the reason for his presence in the district, his face grew pale; his lips became drawn and blanched at the thought that the paper should so insinuatingly impugn the motives of his excursion to the disreputable portion of the city. The thought angered him greatly; and yet he saw how easy it was that the public should misunderstand the situation. As he thought more of the matter he became composed. He was indeed thankful that no mention had been made of his visit to the Carleton house, since that information would have given ground for further disagreeable conjectures and surmises. For the reading world is only too ready to lend a credulous ear to

scandalous stories of those who are in the public eye.

After carefully reading the newspaper Kennington again summoned the nurse and asked that she at once get in communication with the confidential reporter of the Daily Chronicle and request him to call at the hospital immediately. In the mean time while impatiently waiting for that person's arrival, a card was brought to him by the hospital orderly bearing the name

MISS MAY CARLETON

He was greatly surprised that this individual should wish to see him; but since she had supplied him with valuable information the night before, he could not do other than permit her to come in. Accompanied by the nurse, the Carleton woman entered the room. With a display of genuine concern she inquired as to his condition. Kennington thanked and assured her that he was getting along very well. Whereupon his visitor with a covert side-glance at the nurse stated that she had certain news of a strictly private nature to impart to him. Tactfully Kennington asked the nurse to retire, which the latter did, deeply wondering what possible relationship this woman, whose type and demeanor were of unmistakable stamp, could have with the patient. After the nurse had gone, Miss Carleton carefully closed the door to make sure that the information she had

for Kennington could not possibly become the property of other ears than the ones for which it was intended. She proceeded at once by asking, "Mr. Kennington, do you have any idea who shot you last night?"

"I suppose some one of my political enemies did; but I could not even surmise who the gunman might have been, since this dastardly act was committed behind my back." Kennington wonderingly replied.

"Well, I'll tell you," the woman continued; "after you left my house, Mr. Kennington, a young man by the name of Jere Patton came in, and in his usual fool way flashed a roll of bills. He soon got to a point where he began to talk. He told that the money he had was the easiest he had ever made. He declared O'Leary had given it to him for promising to shoot you; and then he boasted how he got you. He tendered me the very same one hundred dollar bill you bade me give O'Leary; and I'll keep it to be used as evidence against the miserable coward of a lieutenant."

Kennington thanked the woman for this unexpected and unsolicited information, and before she could say anything further in stepped the reporter unannounced. With a hasty good-bye May Carleton left the room and the newspaper man stared curiously after her.

"Pardon me for interrupting your conversation. I hurried from the office to answer your call, which the nurse said was urgent, and I did not expect to find company here, or else I would have rapped on the door and waited for your summons."

“Kennington smiled faintly and replied, No harm done, we were through talking. I am very glad to see you. I wish to give you just a little bit of true information, with which you may allay the public mind. The time is not yet ripe for full details, but those you will receive later. We all know every one is anxious to learn what the next move will be in this game of cleaning out the grafters. Since it appears that there is much question and rumor abroad as to why I happened to be in the district where I was shot you may quote me as saying, that I was strictly attending to my official business. I found it simply impossible to obtain the information that I needed from the police officers of that district, therefore I took the matter in my own hand; went down into the underworld and secured enough evidence to carry out my plan of civic reform. I was shot from the rear by a hired gunman whose identity is known, as well as that of those who hired him. Several arrests will be made within the next twenty-four hours, and it will not be surprising that some of the ‘City Fathers’ will be very much embarrassed before this matter is settled,” he concluded his remarks with a determined click of his square cut jaw. The reporter thanked him profusely, delighted over this great scoop for his paper, and wishing him a speedy recovery he departed.

Somewhat fatigued because of these interviews and his weakened condition owing to the loss of blood the night before, Kennington wearily closed his eyes and with a sigh of relief gave himself over to sleep, nature’s sweet restorer. . . .

The news of Kennington's attempted assassination was quite a shock to Jennie. Though she had seen him the evening before in a very compromising situation, she still could not free her mind of him. Several times during the day she called up the hospital, to inquire how he was getting along, refusing to divulge her identity, each time stating that it was simply a friend who had inquired. As she picked up the evening paper her eyes fell upon the lines:

“KENNINGTON ISSUES STATEMENT FROM SICK BED
IN THE HOSPITAL!”

Eagerly she devoured the account. During the reading of the item her heart was filled with dual emotions and furtively she wiped away the tears which welled up within her eyes. She was filled with a spirit of self-resentment and chagrin, that she should have so misjudged Kennington the night before, when he was only bent upon a mission of duty. The truth of the matter of the whole affair was so entirely different from the construction which her father had put upon Kennington's visit, and from what he was anxious to have her surmise. A tinge of suspicion permeated her mind as she analyzed the details of the occurrence; and she could not help being incensed at her father's apparent duplicity. “How did he know that Mr. Kennington was down in that district, and in that particular place?” With her characteristic firmness and resolution, she at once determined to speak to her parent about it. Gerard did not come home till late that night, but Jennie intercepted him as he passed through the hall to retire to his room at once.

"Father, did you read Mr. Kennington's statement about the shooting last night?"

"Yes, what of it?"

"I believe it throws a great light upon the visit of which we have judged him so harshly."

"Tut, tut, what possesses you? Why do you bother me and yourself with that fellow? Of course we all knew he would make a statement in the paper."

"Well, if you do not believe what he says how would you account for his being shot?"

"Oh, I suppose he got into a quarrel with some of the frequenters of the district; a fight ensued and he was shot. Had he stayed away from such places he would not be in the hospital now, and as it is, it serves him right," he testily responded. "Let me go now for I am tired!"

"Just a minute, father, I have worried so much about the matter all day; and I believe we have been entertaining evil opinions of Mr. Kennington. I feel that it is no more than right that we should discuss this matter at least for a few minutes. Have you any reason to believe that the statement you have just made is correct, or is it merely a supposition on your part?"

"Why do you catechise your father? Do you think that I would wilfully misrepresent things?"

"No, of course not."

"Then why are you interested in these sordid, muck-raking things at all?" Gerard, who was growing thoroughly impatient by this time, angrily asked, "What is that fellow to you?"

"Father, you have not answered my question."

You took such great pains last night to show me what an apparently wicked man Mr. Kennington is. Do you really know the actual purpose of his visit to that house; and how came you to know of it? ”

“I do not care to discuss newspaper scandal further, and common decency forbids me to reply.” Whereupon Jennie remarked:

“I thoroughly believe what Mr. Kennington says; but why should you be so averse to accept his statement as true? If Kennington was not shot by an assassin, who did shoot him, do you know? ”

“How should I know? ”

“Mr. Kennington was shot in the back by a thief and a pickpocket, who was given money to commit this dastardly deed; and I sincerely hope that he will be apprehended as well as his cowardly accomplices.”

“It’s a lie!” Gerard shouted, his face turning ashen pale.

Quietly, Jennie replied, “I am surprised to hear you speak in such ungentlemanly terms, so contrary to your usual way of speaking; but if it is a lie, prove it to be such.”

Gerard sulkily retorted, “I presume you have been visiting Kennington at the hospital and he has filled your mind with wild, unreasonable tales and doubts. He has actually taught you to disbelieve and hate your father. I’ll get him for that.”

“I have not visited nor spoken to Mr. Kennington since he was taken to the hospital; but I am only sorry now that I have not. I believe that he has been shamefully treated and wronged. He has tried to carry out the duties of his office, honestly and fear-

lessly, and as a result he has been hated, hounded and persecuted by crooked politicians." Her eyes flashed brilliantly and her bosom heaved and fell rapidly as she continued:

"Even the police and detective forces have deliberately refused to do their duty when he sent them upon errands to discover wickedness in high places, to locate persons implicated in taking bribes for carrying on iniquity."

Gerard scowled, and his face was darkened with anger as he endeavored to interrupt her conversation, but she kept on undauntedly: "These would-be officers of the law tried to deceive him and refused to do their duties; and thus it became necessary for Mr. Kennington to visit the disreputable plague spots of our city, which the wicked administration has allowed to remain. Just as he says here in the paper tonight, he has obtained first-hand information against the grafters and because he is a brave man, fearlessly doing his duty, those whose business it is to see that law is enforced, had him shot in the back by an assassin under cover!"

"Who has told you this pack of lies?"

"It's the truth, father, it's the truth; and not lies at all!" She warmly replied, "and I am going to help him, if he will let me, for — I love him," she concluded almost hysterically; and then without noticing her father who was leaning heavily against the hall table, trembling with both rage and fear, she quickly turned and left for her room.

The following morning she sent Kennington a large bouquet of roses with a little note attached, express-

ing her hopes for his speedy recovery. This was done partly to assuage her conscience for having censured Kennington wrongly, and partly, as the reader will surmise, as a token of friendship which had changed into deeper affection. When the nurse brought in the flowers and the note, Kennington's joy knew no bounds, and while pressing the roses to his nostrils to inhale their sweet fragrance, he stealthily pressed a kiss upon the soft petals. To the nurse, who secretly smiling, had watched him he said; "Will you kindly call up Miss Gerard at her residence and extend my sincerest thanks for her considerate remembrance and tell her that my pleasure and gratitude for these flowers could only be increased by a personal call from her." Boyishly he added, "Be sure and tell me what she says in return. Go now and telephone, like the good young lady that you are."

With a passing thought of the lines in Whittier's famous "Maud Muller," "It might have been!" the nurse went on her way to do as bidden.

That afternoon Jennie drove to the hospital in her electric coupé, and alighting from it glanced at the many bright windows of the magnificent structure, secretly wondering which might be the one belonging to Kennington's room. Soon she was taken up in the elevator to the third floor and then brought face to face with the man she loved. Her heart gave a joyful flutter as Kennington greeted her with a bright smile and eyes beaming with delight. The nurse at once saw that she was not needed, and quietly disappeared. For a moment there was an awkward silence, but Jennie soon broke it by seating

herself at his bedside and saying: "Little did I think when last we parted that I should see you next, lying here in the hospital, Mr. Kennington. It is an outrage, an indescribable shame, really I cannot find words sufficient to express myself concerning this lamentable happening, and I told my father the same, too," she added, with a saucy little shake of her pretty head. Kennington almost felt like blessing his would-be assassin, that his vicious, cowardly act was responsible for bringing the dearest girl in the world to him.

"I am indeed very thankful to you for coming, Miss Gerard, and feel amply repaid for my inconveniences, since you are so nobly defending me."

"You need no defense, Mr. Kennington, in spite of all the unpleasant things that were suggested in yesterday's morning's paper."

"I can hardly wait until I am well again in order to take up the work and, with you for my ally, I know — I will win."

"You can count on me to assist you in every way possible."

"I hope you may always feel like that!" he replied with a meaning look that portrayed his feelings toward her very plainly. A faint blush stole over her cheeks as she perceived the double import of his words.

"I hope the guilty are quickly caught and brought to justice very speedily, not only the would-be assassin, but also the police officials and politicians who hired him."

A feeling of intense pain shot through Kennington's

heart at this last remark of the fair girl, for he knew that his visitor did not realize that she was condemning her own parent. She would in time learn the painful truth of her father's complicity with Jere Patton's crime. But Kennington dismissed this somber thought and left it for the future to take care of. The golden present was his to enjoy and why should he permit it to be blighted with disagreeable thoughts? Only too soon for Kennington did the time arrive when Miss Gerard had to leave, and as she extended her beautiful, soft, warm hand in farewell, he gave it a hearty pressure which she faintly returned. Though hardly any words were spoken, their eyes and hearts telegraphed to one another the message of love, which their lips did not utter. When she was gone, Kennington worried as to the outcome of affairs. He stood, as it were, at the parting ways of Love and Duty and, though he literally adored the girl, his high sense of duty bade him to continue the pathway he had so fearlessly begun to trod.

Little he dreamed that fate had decreed that Jennie should, in a most unusual way, be apprised of her father's rascality and dual nature; and that he would after all be spared the painful duty of inflicting the heart-rending knowledge and grief upon the one he so dearly longed to call his own for life.

CHAPTER XII

SANDERSON INTERVIEWS MISS GERARD

Though Kennington was confined to his room in the hospital because of his bullet wound he was extremely busy preparing for the trial the evidence he had secured against the grafters. With a joy of battle and a lust for conflict filling his mind he outlined carefully worded and comprehensive indictments that would not leave the slightest loopholes for the escape of those who were to fall into the net that he was setting for them. He did not intend that justice should be delayed; that the penalties of crime should be averted by legal technicalities; by demurers, alibies and appeals. Unlike his contemporary, David Jacobs, who looked upon the law as a bristling hedge behind which malefactors might hide, if they had the price for his services, Kennington regarded the law as an instrument for justice and civic righteousness. Some of his legal friends thought him too dogmatic, too puritanical in his interpretation of civil and criminal statutes. But with these ideals in mind he had inaugurated his battle for civic reform.

On his table, had one been permitted to peruse the papers which lay thereon, were to be found charges of bribery against the chief of police, two captains, one lieutenant, and even Joseph Gerard himself. Kennington's work at the hospital was punctuated

now and then by pleasant visits with Jennie. Each time when her card was sent up he busied himself clearing the table of its papers and documents and making hurried preparations to receive her. These short calls were so keenly enjoyed by him that one could almost truthfully have said that the young barrister would be a trifle sorry when he should leave the hospital; because then these delightful visits would cease.

At Jennie's home conditions were not so pleasant. The very atmosphere of the magnificent residence seemed to be pervaded with a spirit of gloom and foreboding. Ever since the night that Kennington was shot, Gerard was extremely sullen, morose and non-communicative. He spoke little to his wife and daughter at the dining table; he partook of his food hastily and limited his conversation to shortest possible answers. The slightest trifles irritated him to a marked degree. He was easily vexed and extremely nervous. After coming home from the office in the evening, he spent most of his time before the meal in the library writing. But whatever he wrote no one ever knew; for, it was evident from his manner, to judge that which he had written displeased him; and after each effort he threw the papers in the grate fire. When dinner was over, each night, he went to his room at once. He tried to read the newspapers and magazines but these would soon fall from his nervous, trembling hands even before a page was half read. He smoked incessantly. His look was haggard, anxious and worried.

Frequently Jennie would inquire solicitously as to

his welfare and sympathizingly would ask if she could help him; but, much to his daughter's distress, this display of filial affection was usually met and repelled in a rough, rude manner. Jennie wisely refrained from saying anything of her frequent visits to Kennington at the hospital; and when the latter returned to his work in the city attorney's office, Gerard came home at an unusually early hour. He was extremely frustrated and seemed to be in a great hurry. He told his family that business interests in the East suddenly required his attention; and since he had not been feeling well for some time he had decided to combine business with pleasure and to take a few days' rest at some watering place.

The next day's papers announced that Mr. Gerard had suddenly left the city for an extended trip. To those who could read between the lines it could be easily seen that veiled hints and insinuations were contained in this announcement of his abrupt departure, since the chief of police and several of his subordinates had been indicted, arrested and placed in jail without the privilege of bail or bond.

Jennie drove her father to the station on the morning he left the city and, as he kissed her good-bye, he said; "You'll always love your old daddy, won't you, dear, no matter what happens?" and before she could answer he quickly mounted the steps of the Pullman, leaving her standing on the platform, confused, depressed and with tears glistening in her eyes. She then turned and walked slowly out of the depot trying to conjure the meaning of this strange and most unusual remark of her father's.

On the fourth night after Gerard had gone East Jennie returned from the theater, where she had been with Kennington. Her father's absence from home had made it possible for her to accept the invitation to spend the evening in Kennington's company at the opera. Kennington was secretly glad that her father had left the city, thus sparing him, at that time, the painful duty of prosecuting Jennie's parent; for he had never once wavered in bringing the bribe-takers to justice; and Gerard had only just escaped the serving of the warrant by his sudden leave-taking.

For a while she lingered in the library, gazing into the grate fire, fondly recalling the happenings of the evening, the fascinating conversations carried on between acts and the little covert glances, full of happiness of an unspoken but potent love during the pathetically appealing parts of the opera. She indulged in dreams of tenderest kind till aroused by the clock striking the hour of midnight. At once she departed for her room and retired for the night. Soon she was encompassed by a healthful sleep. How long she slept she did not know, but she was suddenly startled from her slumbers by a stealthy footstep in the hall adjoining her room. She listened intently; some one seemed to be approaching her chamber. She was thoroughly frightened. No one was at home, save herself, her mother, a maid and a feeble old butler. Breathlessly and with feverish anxiety she waited for developments. Quietly she sat up in bed and, just as she did so, the door to her room, which had been standing ajar, was gently

opened and a man stepped in, flashing a pocket searchlight in her face.

"Be quiet, Miss!" he said in a low voice, "I'll not hurt you. I know it is rather unconventional to call on so estimable a young lady as you are at this hour of the night."

Jennie stared at the intruder with a surprise that was equal to her fear. In the mellow moonlight, which stole through the half-raised curtain of her window, she was able to discern that the visitor was a tall, lithe individual, who wore a domino. Stepping over to the little dressing table he pulled the beaded chain of the electric candle; he then closed the door blandly, saying as he did so:

"Forgive me, for calling on you in your boudoir while you are in dishabille; I know it is not good taste, but we sometimes have to forego the little conventions of society for various reasons."

Jennie was much frightened at this display of audacity and familiarity. Heedless of her distress the man continued: "No, do not scream; I assure you as a gentleman, — and I am a real one, too, — that I'll not harm you."

Jennie felt her composure returning; for this was the most unheard-of experience; the situation was growing actually novel.

"I have already examined the contents of the wall-safe down stairs, inspected the bric-a-brac and have taken an inventory of everything that is worth while. You'll pardon me, for my personal reference to your virtues; while I know that you are not a vain young lady, I do know that you possess some very

exquisite jewels. I am both a connoisseur and a collector of these baubles; and I thought that I might as well add yours to my collections. You wore them when you attended the charity ball. I had a delightful half hour's conversation with you that evening."

Miss Gerard was stimulated by this sarcastic address and the thought flashed through her mind: "This is the so-called reporter who attended the charity ball."

"So YOU are the gentleman thief who robbed Miss Darrell of her pearls? "

With a cynical smile he removed the domino and bowing to her he said sarcastically:

"I am discovered, fair lady! "

"Yes, it is a wonder that a man of your talents and ability should stoop to such a low, mean occupation of robbing defenceless women."

"Pardon me, that is not my occupation, it is my profession," he retorted.

"Why did you select a night when my father is away from home? "

"Oh, I was not afraid of him; but of course I waited for Mr. Gerard to leave, as I did not care to embarrass him. I was considerate of his feelings."

"What do you mean? " she spiritedly answered.

"I mean it is very well that your father did leave, both for his health and business; and I really believe that some more of us will depart from these regions. Your young friend, Mr. Kennington, with whom I saw you at the theater tonight, — this modern Knight of St. George, who is trying to slay the dragon

of vice, — is doing his best to make a torrid climate of this lake region. In fact, your old dad, excuse my familiarity, found it getting too hot for him and for that reason he left.”

Heated with indignation which made her forget the situation she exclaimed: “How dare you insult me in this manner, or use my father’s name that way?”

“Don’t speak so loud, Miss Gerard, lest you disturb the rest of the occupants of the house from their peaceful slumbers. I did not mean to insult you. I am a burglar, an honest burglar, a gentleman, too; but your father is a thief, only he goes by another name. Oh, yes, he is a church vestryman, a stock broker, a former member of the legislature, I know; but a more accomplished, heartless crook never lived.”

Jennie’s eyes blazed with anger, but she was powerless to reply.

“Forgive me, dear Miss; it even pains me to grieve you so, but every reformer loves the truth, even though it may be brutal. Prepare yourself for another shock. It was your hypocritical father who hired the young gunman who shot Kennington. I may be low and degraded in the estimation of society, but I do possess at least a little spark of honor. If I wanted to rid myself of some obnoxious enemy, I’d do it myself and not hide behind some one else. Furthermore, are you aware of the fact that your father owns the very tenement houses in which you carry on your noble settlement work? Also, do you know that the ‘Honorable Joseph Gerard’ receives tributes from the city’s Mary Magdalenes?”

“Why, this is simply terrible; how can you say this? How can it be? I do not believe you, but—”

“No, Miss, I’m going to do the talking tonight, for I do not know when I will be granted the opportunity of seeing you again. Listen, you can’t help it because your dad is an old rascal; and, if you do not believe me, ask Kennington; he knows it only too well. Don’t be alarmed, I know you settlement workers and would-be reformers lay great stress upon the influence of heredity. But, let me tell you, you folks misunderstand this great force of nature. Because a man’s a criminal does not mean his son is going to become a criminal also, not in the least. My parents are in no way responsible for my crimes, so-called; I received from them a strong vigorous body and an active mind. I chose my own ways of doing. As I said before, your dad is a crook, but he possesses a healthy body and strong mind; you inherited these qualities, no doubt, but he did not pass on his acquired characteristics. States of mental enfeeblement and insanity are inherited of course, and these conditions when transmitted from the parent to the offspring make the progeny susceptible to the viciousness of society. In other words, society is busy making criminals of the inferior sort, such as petty sneak thieves, pickpockets like Jere, the poor simple fool who shot Kennington. Of course they do not belong to my sort; I am a crime capitalist. To my class belong bank presidents and cashiers, life insurance presidents, stock brokers and food gamblers. Heredity favored us with enough brains to think, and I am thankful for it.

"You are trying to do a splendid work in the settlement; let me tell you a secret. If you will see that the poor get a chance to secure a livelihood, a few rudiments of education and an occasional luxury, I assure you, that your vigorous efforts will be far more effective for the amelioration of the ills of life. But, of course, before you can do that, the hypocrisy and rascality of society must be destroyed. However, I did not mean to sermonize; in fact, I have spent already too much time here. Just tell me, are not your jewels in that box there on the little table?" And so saying he quickly went over to the Louis Quinze dressing table and deliberately helped himself to the gems; briefly examining them he slipped them into his inside coat pocket.

"No, no, do not sound the alarm, for, though I promised that no harm should befall you, it might become painfully necessary for me to use rude methods, should you feel inclined to create a scene."

Though she was losing her jewels, she was glad that she was escaping without any physical injury or violence. She shivered in an agony of fear.

"Adieu, Miss Gerard! I wish to thank you for the pleasant interview you have so graciously granted me and, believe me, its memory shall linger fondly in my mind when I am abroad enjoying the delightful sunny climate of Italy and southern France. The art galleries and operas are calling me; also the fascinating games of "rouge et noir" and others at dear old Monte Carlo; and, in parting, let me remind you again that the Hon. Joseph Gerard practices the profession of robbing the people, only in a more sordid and despicable manner than I ever did."

With a courtly bow he rapidly strode to one of the French windows and noiselessly let himself out into the silent night.

After Sanderson had gone Jennie, with a moan, sank upon her pillows. Thus she spent the remainder of the night in utter misery.

CHAPTER XIII

NEMESIS

The prosecuting attorney's return from the hospital to his office caused a great stir in the city's official circles; and a keen sense of uneasiness pervaded the hearts of the municipal office holders, especially those whose performance of public duties had been the least bit suspicious. Even the honest ones shared in this fear, which seemed to spread as a contagion. The larger portion of the public was delighted; Kennington was commended at the private and public clubs, the city's churches, in fact everywhere. His name was on every one's lips; he was truly the man of the hour. He received many telegrams, these coming from various points throughout the state. Letters of congratulation for his recovery poured in upon him, as did communications commending his good work.

The Mayor's office was the scene of many open and secret consultations held by local politicians who felt their former power rapidly waning. The Mayor had kept in constant communication with Gerard, and every little detail and movement had been sent to the latter. Five days had elapsed since Gerard left the city, when the Mayor sent him a telegram, reading as follows: "Extend your visit indefinitely until you hear from me. Kennington is very busy."

This message went to Palm Beach, Fla., instead of New York City; for Gerard had deliberately misled the public in his announcement in the papers that he was going East. A second admonition to remain where he was, was not needed. He felt safe in his present location and he did not care to return home before the "spasm of civic righteousness," as he called it, had died down.

Several of the plain clothes men resigned, as did some of the higher police officials; for they thought it better to give up a fat job than risk the dangerous chances of a trial. A few of them found it quite convenient to visit relatives living in distant states. The vacancies caused by these resignations were filled by new men; and, even though appointed by the Mayor, they knew they dare not follow the path their predecessors had trodden. The new appointees were called into Kennington's private office and a gospel of municipal purity left their ears tingling and burning, as it vigorously and commandingly came from Kennington. He told his plain-clothes men about his would-be assassin; that he was a young pick-pocket by the name Jere Patton, who travelled in company with an old man having a long prison record and who was now supposed to be reformed and serving as a janitor at a Salvation Army Hall on North Jefferson Street.

After this description was given they were instructed to discover and arrest Jere as soon as possible. If this command had been issued to them a year before they would have laughed it to scorn; but now they were only too glad, willing and anxious

to serve the young prosecuting attorney whose power and popularity were increasing by leaps and bounds. No countermanding orders now-a-days came from the Mayor's office. His rough tactics had failed; sentiment was against him, and his present actions were being governed by the old adage: "The easiest way is the best." He felt chagrined and annoyed; his egotism and pride were wounded, and he was sore that a young man, just in the early thirties, should be able to thwart him, dictate and even command him at every turn. Discretion was the best of his valor and he meekly submitted to the new order of affairs, hoping thereby to escape with a safe and whole skin himself.

When Jere had recovered from the debauch in which he had indulged just after the shooting of Kennington, he was painfully fearful lest he had given away his secret. Toledo Red had often reminded him that he talked too much when under the influence of liquor. Fearing that he had done so in this instance he took some of his money, left from the dissipation, and bought a ticket for Denver. There he remained for about ten days, living in a riotous manner, drinking and gambling. Soon his money was gone. At once he resorted to his light-finger trade and on a Saturday night he picked the pockets of unwary shoppers at the public market. Being successful, from a financial point of view, he again filled up on liquor; and while in state of alcoholic euphoria, he purchased a railroad ticket for the "City of the Lake."

He was thorough'y sobered when he reached the metropolis, but his nerves were unstrung, his hands trembled, his feet seemed heavy, his knees were wobbly and a feeling of lassitude and exhaustion permeated his whole body. He was less annoyed by the fear of arrest than he was irresistibly anxious to get a vigorous bracer. He went immediately to the Salvation Army Hall where he found George who was very much pleased, though surprised to see him.

"What you doin' back here now?" he demanded.

"You'se don't seem glad to see me."

"I am glad to see you all right; but don't you think you're running a chance? O'Leary's in the cooler with some more o' the brass buttons and they can't get out on bail even. The new guy on this beat ain't no good; you can't frame up nothin' with him. Business is on the bum. This town will soon be a dead one; and, by the way, they're lookin' for you, too."

"Who squealed? O'Leary?"

"No, you bet he didn't; that fellow's on the square. Some of the guys said May Carleton peached, but I don't believe it; she's always been on the level, too."

"Well, let's don't waste time talking; let's go to Dinty's; I'm all in."

"It would be safer for you to duck right away."

"It may be; but I got to have a drink and a stiff one, too!"

"Well, if you'se goin' to run chances, you might as well come on; get what you want, but take an old man's advice, and after that dig out at once."

Toledo Red was anxious for Jere to escape arrest for two reasons: He did not want to see his young friend go to prison, because he really liked Jere, and they were good friends; then again, the boy had been a successful thief, and had shared his earnings with George with a free hand. Thus, arrest for Jere meant disaster for both of them. The next half hour was spent in drinking and eating. Jere's palsied nerves seemed to demand an unduly large amount of spirituous liquors, and in a short while both men were in a mild state of intoxication. Jere's thought processes became entangled and distorted. The little reasoning power with which nature had endowed him, fled. While thus stupified, and totally oblivious of impending danger, the new officer of the district stepped into the saloon and perceiving Jere he at once placed him under arrest. Whereupon George, in his half drunken manner, arraigned the policeman: "Oh, that's the reason why you'se been comin' in the Salvation Hall lately askin' me all kinds o' questions about me work an' if I did it alone now, an' where me young pal had gone to?" To which, however, the officer made no reply; but after tightly securing Jere with a twist-chain around the wrist, he led him out of the place to the nearest patrol box. there to call for and await the wagon from Central Station to take his captive to headquarters. Though drunk, Jere became frightened and whiningly begged the officer:

"I'll fix it all right with you, if you let me slip away this time; besides I ain't the feller you'se lookin' fer." The answer to this pleading was laconic: — "You tell that to the Judge."

The next morning about eight o'clock Jere was taken to the prosecutor's office by two plain clothes men. He had a bursting headache; the dissipation of the evening before left him feeling extremely miserable both in mind and body, and the ever-increasing fear which further benumbed his liquor-poisoned brain rendered him an easy and helpless subject for the inquisition he was about to undergo. Kennington addressed the officers with a friendly "Good morning, gentlemen!" then looking intently at Jere for a few seconds, which seemed like an eternity to the forlorn culprit, he asked, "What is your name? What are you here for?"

Jere was unable to answer; and he withered beneath Kennington's look of scrutiny, casting his eyes upon the floor and remaining silent.

"Since you cannot reply, I'll do it for you," the attorney resumed.

"You are charged with shooting a man, three weeks ago." Jere paled but made no answer.

"Fortunately the individual recovered, and lucky for you; for, had he died you would have been charged with murder; as it is you are indicted for assault and battery with intent to kill."

"It ain't so; they can't prove it."

"Yes, it is so; I am the man you shot. How much money did they pay you for this brave act."

At this statement Jere was on the verge of collapse; and, had he not been standing between the two officers, he would have fallen to the floor; as it was, they assisted and led him to a chair directly op-

posite Kennington, who never took his eyes off the young man, but continued, saying:

“Just make a clean breast of it and do yourself a favor, my young fellow. You did the shooting, of course; you were not mad at me especially and, therefore, did it for no personal reason. You were hired to do it. The fellows who employed you are more guilty than you are. You were only a tool in their hands.”

Jere breathed rapidly; his face alternately paled and reddened and large drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead; nervously he drummed with his fingers on the arm of the chair; but he made no reply; because he was so frightened and overwhelmed by the fact that his guilt had been discovered. Kennington then opened a drawer in his desk and took out a photograph of a man in the uniform, worn by the lieutenant of the police, and pointing his index finger at the picture he held it before Jere's face and asked: “Do you know this man? Have you ever seen him before? How much did he pay you to shoot me?”

A huge lump arose in Jere's throat and he seemed to almost choke; an oppressive sense of guilt and terrible fear engulfed him; and as he sat there, shaking in every limb, the thought slowly passed through his leaden-like brain: “Here is the man I tried to murder. I am found out, and I can do nothing now but to ask for mercy.”

Falteringly he answered: “Yes, O'Leary promised me five hundred dollars to shoot you; but he has paid only half of it so far;” then bursting out into a

flood of tears, he added: "Oh, how I wish I hadn't done it; I don't want to go to prison; please, don't send me there; I'll be good if you will give me another chance!"

Jere's confession had quickly been taken down by the prosecutor's secretary, who handed the paper to Kennington, and the latter placed it before Jere to subscribe his name.

"Come on, sign this; it's of no use to put the state to the expense of a jury trial when you admit your guilt, as you have done just now."

The young would-be gunman affixed his name in a big scrawly, illiterate hand. Jere was taken back to jail to await sentence of the court at a future date. Before leaving the prosecutor's office he pleaded not to be put in the same department of the city's bastille in which O'Leary was being detained, "for," he fearfully explained, "O'Leary might think that I squealed on him; but I did not, you folks had the goods on me, so what could I say? He's more guilty than I am, anyhow."

Kennington bade the officers do as their prisoner requested; and, with a freer heart, Jere left the office, willing to trust his future lot with the law rather than with his erstwhile employer. Jere was a creature of selfish instincts only; and, though in the clutch of the law, he was ready to grasp at anything that might be to his benefit.

When the door closed behind his would-be assassin, Kennington turned to his desk and on a small tablet marked down the figure one, and semi-audibly said to himself: "Well, this is case number one of which Nemesis has disposed; who is next?"

Stepping into the corridor of the court-house to go to the Circuit Court room he was shocked to hear an enterprising young newsboy yell as he ran through the hall: "Poiper! Poiper! All about Joe Gerard's Drownin'!"

Kennington bought a paper, giving the lad a dime and telling him to keep the change. The young Israelitic vendor spat on the coin and put it in his pocket, this peculiar and unclean ceremony being performed for the sake of "good luck" to bring further monetary blessings. With an indescribable feeling of horror, mingled with sorrow, and yet one bordering on relief, Kennington read the brief account as follows: "Telegraphic information has been received that the Hon. Joseph Gerard of this city was accidentally drowned while bathing at Palm Beach. Particulars later. He was one of the best-known politicians of the city and the state."

Involuntarily the words, "Number two," fell from Kennington's lips. He hastened at once to the next telephone booth and called up Miss Gerard to offer her his heart-felt sympathies. It was quite a while before he could reach her over the wire; in a tearful voice she responded to his inquiries. In a few well-chosen words he offered his condolence and also voiced a willingness and a desire to assist her and her mother during the ensuing days. For all of which Jennie thanked him in a quiet manner; yet her heart was relieved with the knowledge that even amid her poignant grief Kennington should so graciously offer aid and speak so kindly of her father's demise, knowing him as he really had been.

Gerard's death was doubly hard for Jennie to bear. His tragic end disclosed conclusively the duality of her father's character. It fell to her lot the day after the funeral to survey the deceased parent's belongings, for her mother was absolutely helpless in her self-centered sorrow. While performing this last, sad task the poor grief-stricken girl found the telegram, which the Mayor had sent her father, warning him not to return to the city of X—— until he received directions to do so. Bitter, briny tears fell upon this incriminating little slip of yellow paper and she mused to herself sadly: "That thief Sander-son was right after all, though I doubted him. I am glad that I did not ask Mr. Kennington. How brutal the truth is sometimes, especially to me in this trying hour!" And she said half aloud, "Oh, Arthur, how good you are! How can I face you after this disclosure?"

Jere waited eight days ere he made his appearance before the Judge; and, during this interim he was visited several times by his pal, Toledo Red. At one of these visits this old reprobate endeavored to slip Jere, when the jailor's back was turned, some small steel saws and files wherewith he might find his way to liberty. But the best laid plans oftentimes go awry; and they did in this case. A little while later when George was about to leave he felt a heavy hand upon his shoulder and heard a gruff voice inviting him to stay a while and partake of the bounty of the city's free lodging house; and, turning around, he found himself face to face with the deputy sheriff.

"Now, what's the matter?" George insolently asked.

"Matter enough," the officer of the law sarcastically replied: "I thought you'd quit the game, but I guess, 'once a crook always a crook.' You can explain about those saws and files tomorrow morning in the Court. Aiding and abetting a prisoner to escape is a serious charge; and, as an 'old bird,' you ought to know that."

Forthwith the old rascal was put under lock and key. Again Nemesis had overtaken another offender, for fate had decreed that George and Jere should be sentenced in court on the same day. The next morning, as the clock struck the hour of nine, the court bailiff sharply rapped the gavel on his desk and called the room to order. The entire audience arose, while the venerable Judge Maxon stepped to his chair. When the ceremony of opening the court was finished an ominous silence prevailed throughout the room; then in a deep, low voice the Judge asked the prosecuting attorney to proceed with the first case on the docket.

The Judge was a gentleman of the old school and a jurist who had once believed in that penal philosophy which demanded an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. He was always calm and dignified; but on this morning he appeared more sober and austere than usual. He seemed to be the embodiment of an unapproachable dignity, the personification of an abstract pitiless justice. His looks belied his inner feelings, however. The advance of years had softened his heart; there was a quality of pity that tem-

pered his justice with mercy and was only restrained by the legal statutes that bound him.

This morning his countenance appeared sterner than usual. His snow-white hair, as it graced the pale skin of his temples, which were blue-penciled by tortuous veins that lay beneath, added to the pallor of his cheeks. They were furrowed with deep wrinkles, not engraved by the hand of time alone, but by significant and unusual experiences of life. Heavy lines crossed his forehead; his eyes, as they occasionally peered over the rims of his glasses into space, seemed to look down a vista of years which held for him a burden not lightened by the flight of time.

A feeling akin to pity arose in Kennington's heart as he scrutinized the bent old gentleman whose name was linked with all the leading organizations of the state that worked for society's reform and betterment. This judge was the President of the State Bar Association. There was no enterprise worth mentioning bent upon humanity's uplift in which he was not interested. And as the prosecutor surveyed His Honor more closely than he had ever done before, he could not help but wonder why this worried, depressed look, which expressed a dread of some haunting spectre invisible to all eyes save those of the Judge alone. He quieted his inquisitive mind with the thought that perhaps the daily contact with life's derelicts, the ever-present spectacle of crime and passion, had left its impress upon his countenance. Kennington thought of these things as he stated the facts in Jere's case to Judge Maxon. This youth

had confessed to assault and battery with intent to kill; and even though the young gunman had made the assault upon the prosecutor himself the latter did not display any spirit of vindictiveness or retaliation, but simply laid a signed confession before the Judge, who carefully read it over, then summoned Jere to rise and stand before him.

From his chair behind the dull-toned oak desk Judge Maxon looked intently at Jere, an apology of manhood. Limply the defendant was partly standing, partly leaning against the railing in front of the the platform where the Judge was seated. As Jere was there in plain view of all he presented a pitiful aspect; poorly nourished, hollow chested, with a low forehead, sunken cheeks colored with a hectic flush; the evidences of disease and dissipation were plainly apparent. He was truly an object of abject misery and terror, barely able to pronounce his own name. The only thing that saved his face from being indescribable was his aquiline nose, a solitary heirloom of the strain of some superior blood of his ancestry. Even to the Judge's unscientific eye, that is from a medical point of view, were noticeable the stigmata of degeneracy in this young offender of the law. After having taken a mental invoice, so to say, of this animated lump of clay, bearing the misnomer of man, the Judge asked:

"Where are your parents?"

To this Jere replied that he knew little of them. A look of pain passed over the Judge's face; and, after a moment's pause, he began:

"Is there any reason why sentence should not be

pronounced upon you? ” The reply being negative, he continued in a voice which seemed to Kennington as if coming from the remote past:

“ Jere Patton, I sentence you to the State’s Prison for a period of two to twenty-one years at hard labor.”

Having made the entry in his book, the Judge resumed speaking to the youth, still standing before him:

“ It grieves me very much to send a young man of your age to prison; but the law must be upheld; and, for the good of society, you must be removed from its midst until you have proven that you are a fit subject to live among men again. That is all, Mr. Prosecutor; next case, please.”

Jere was led away and a florid, burly policeman brought George to the front. In a few minutes the indictment was read, to which the sinner plead guilty as indifferently as if he had been asked the time of the day. Without further loss of time, hardly giving more than a passing look, the Court sentenced Toledo Red to the same number of years that had been received by his young pal. Whether it was irony, or the imbecility of senility, who knows? George said:

“ Thank ye, yer Honor! Gimme seventy years if you like; it’s all the same to me! ” and, shamblingly, he followed the officer back to the jail, pending his transfer to the “ big house,” as he called the State Prison.

CHAPTER XIV

JERE'S IDENTITY REVEALED

Contrary to the usual order of legal events, the wheels of justice moved very quickly during the week in which George and Jere were sentenced to prison. The deposed Lieutenant O'Leary and four other police-officers, seeing that they had been caught red-handed, so to say, in their civic wickedness, concluded that it was safer and the part of wisdom to plead guilty to the indictments which had been brought against them, rather than stand trial, lest they thereby involve their brother officers, and possibly the Mayor himself. They did possess a certain amount of knavish loyalty, which is said to be the characteristic of the "Subterranean Brotherhood." By casting themselves on the mercy of the court they expected to receive lighter sentences. Their families were not to suffer for lack of temporal necessities because of the imprisonment and disgrace of these convicted officers; for each one of the men had managed to make deposits in more than one bank which more than trebled their yearly salaries. They had prepared for a rainy day, and now it had come.

When they appeared before Judge Maxon to enter their pleas of guilty, he denounced their breach of trust and gave them the limit of the law, expressing his regret that the penalty provided for such offenses

was not more severe. A few days later all these men, George and Jere included, were manacled together and, in company of four stalwart deputies, taken to the State Prison. A bitter look of malice shot out of O'Leary's eyes when Jere cautiously glanced toward him, and the young fellow felt easier in thinking that he was quite safely removed from the ex-official; he hoped that in prison this respectable distance would still be maintained. Jere knew that his confession had clinched the evidence that had been brought to bear against O'Leary. He also knew that a man of the lieutenant's type would not hesitate to use any means that might come to his hands for revenge. For once in his life the young pickpocket felt that the officers of the law were really his friends, and he kept very close to his legal escort.

George sat in his seat with an apparent indifference and enjoyed the "stogie" which he had asked one of the deputies to give him.

"Reckon it will be the last decent tobacco I'll get fer a while," he flippantly remarked, as he contentedly puffed azure-gray rings of smoke against the pane of the car window.

"This ain't half bad, Kid! A nice ride down the line and four gents lookin' after us! Enjoy the scenery, Kid, as we go along!"

"I wish I hadn't come back to the city," Jere moaned in reply; "I'd rather ride the bumpers free and easy than be hooked upon the cushions like this."

"Oh, cut out your cryin', Kid; you'll have plenty of time to think it over; go to it like a man!"

The young convict vainly tried to assume an air of cheerfulness and vigorously bit his lips in his efforts to keep back the tears, which more than once had threatened to appear in a briny deluge. His heart sank within him when the great, gray, gloomy walls of the State Penitentiary loomed up in his sight; and he wondered what could be behind them. What did fate hold in store for him?

George, with a veritable sort of gallows humor, remarked: "Here she is, boys, the old 'stir'*; hasn't stirred a bit from her old place!" and he laughed alone at his own foolish pun. To him the institution was a place of refuge; there he would meet friends of his own feather; he knew it would furnish him with the necessities of life, at least, and all his wants would be supplied, except his daily drink of liquor. How he would miss Dinty's saloon with its musty smell and free lunch, and its mute bar-keeper! Widely different were Jere's thoughts. In his childish imagination, the prison they were approaching was to him a place of terror indescribable, where silent horrors were enacted. The tales of brutalities and punishments of prison life, which had been jokingly told him by ex-prisoners, were vividly recalled to his mind. As he passed through the large iron gateway, where a tall handsome turnkey was the jealous monarch of all he surveyed, and, like a Cerberus, was closely watching all that passed in and out, Jere's teeth fairly chattered. He was aroused from his fearful cogitations by the gruff voice of Captain Burns, saying:

* Slang for prison.

“Back again, George? This is the fifth time for you.”

“Well, it ain’t bad, Cap; not so bad at that. Me health is failin’ an’ times is hard; I hopes the doctor gives me a good place in the old folks’ ward wid de ‘Sons o’ Rest.’ I’ll make as good a ‘Senator’ as any of them. De place owes me a pension. Can’t do much work anyhow. Say, Cap, will you put in a good word fer me wid de croaker*?” To which the receiving officer merely grunted in reply. Jere wonderingly listened to all this conversation carried on in such a familiar vein with the Captain, whose actions did not seem so surly, rough and awe-inspiring as did his thick, gruff voice and his impassive face. Yet the youth’s dire apprehensions were not allayed. After the clerk had disposed of the newly arrived men, entering their names in the big book and giving them their respective numbers by which they were to be known from then on, they were taken to the bath-house. George, who had gone through this routine ceremony of entrance many times before, at once began to disrobe and prepare for the bath, while Jere looked around for a private place to discard his garments.

“Hurry up, young fellow; what are you waiting on?” Captain Burns growled at him. Tremblingly the young convict undressed; and, having done so he was told by an attending, lynx-eyed prisoner, to “Get under the shower!” When bathed he was besmeared with a greasy, bluish-looking ointment, whose antiseptic qualities made it extremely valuable

* Slang for doctor.

in this place where men were received in all conditions of bodily uncleanness. This part of initiation finished, the prison clothes were donned.

"What a difference," Jere thought, "between this suit and my own;" and when he endeavored to take some articles out of his citizen's clothes, again the captain's voice grated on his ears; "Leave those alone; you're not allowed anything, except a handkerchief and toothbrush; you can have these two articles, if you own as much."

By the time the young prisoner was fully ready to enter the doctor's office, where he was taken next, George emanated therefrom with a happy smile on his face. For the prison physician had assigned him to the convalescent ward. This was an easy berth in prison. It freed him from labor in the shops and in the yard, where discipline was rigid; and there he was given the unusual liberties to play games all day with a lot of old derelicts who were beyond physical repair. These men, his future companions, were without ambition and hope; here they found continual rest and calm; this was a veritable haven of safety to them, even though it was called prison.

Jere was ushered into the prison physician's office by the hospital orderly, a prisoner who had been assigned to do this duty. The office was furnished with two desks, the roll-top one belonging to the doctor; and the other, a small typewriting desk, seated at which was the doctor's stenographer, who was busy at his typewriter, his fingers flying rapidly over the keys of the machine. In one corner stood a bookcase full of books which bore the names of

medical and psychological subjects. In the other corner was a long shelf filled with rows of immense volumes, which contained the written records of the long mental and physical examinations, also the biographical histories of prisoners received at the institution. Under a glass case were a number of delicate instruments for testing the nervous system of the prison inmates and for measuring their mental reactions and emotions.

In a short while the prison physician entered the office. He was clad in a spotless white linen suit. He took his chair at the desk and quickly perused the commitment papers in Jere's case; first directing the youth to take a seat in a chair just in front of the desk. Jere's fear had now begun to subside somewhat. The prison official treated him kindly and addressed his many questions to the new convict in a frank, friendly manner. He commenced his interrogation by asking the prisoner what he knew about his parents and their antecedents. And when Jere replied that he knew but very little of his father and mother, and nothing at all about his grandparents, the doctor turned to his assistant and said:

"Make a note of this and I will see if we cannot discover the history of this man's relatives in the State's vital statistics, or in the records of some of our other state institutions."

This interview was then followed by a detailed, comprehensive examination. Jere was found to be poorly nourished, a rachitic specimen; his heart beats were irregular and too rapid; he was hollow chested and hectic flushes burned on his cheeks; the

earmarks of inherited physical degeneracy were present everywhere upon his body. The mental survey then followed. Jere's intelligence and emotions were subjected to the latest tests of psychological science. His chronological age was twenty-one years; he was possessed of the animal passions and desires of an adult man, and yet his mentality equaled only that of a child. It was plainly evident to the examining physician that nature and disease had not permitted the full development of his mentality; and these fateful forces of life had placed him in a state of childhood that was to be perpetual and unhappy.

Jere's trial had occupied twenty minutes in the Court of Justice, but no further time had been required to establish the fact that he had committed the crime with which he was charged. The honor and dignity of the state and the law had been preserved. He was a depraved wretch; and, under the chaperonage of the country sheriff, he had been hustled off to prison, wearing the steel bracelets which society had designed for those who violate her laws and customs. In the prison Laboratory of Science Jere was examined for more than three hours; his bodily functions had been tested; his nervous system investigated, his mentality measured. His blood had been examined by the methods known to biological chemistry, and by the secret-discovering microscope. His blood was found to be teeming with the toxemia of the wriggling, wiggling, twisting spirilli of the social plague, a disease which had been the evil gift bestowed upon him by his progenitors. In the Court of Science an appeal had been made.

He was found guilty of a criminal act, but — insane and irresponsible.

Turning to his assistant the prison physician petulantly stated: "This man must suffer, but society has made him what he is! He's not to blame; but who is?"

Jere was at once transferred to the Hospital for Insane Criminals, there to spend the remainder of his days. He was anti-social, not by choice, but by an inherited disease, which was incurable. So far as society was concerned his book of life had been closed, except that he had become a life-long ward of the state.

The great, iron gate in the gray walls clanks dismally behind those who pass from the prison yard into the beautiful grounds of the Hospital for Insane Criminals. The building and its environments are pleasing to the eyes of the visitor, but within the walls are the human derelicts who have made shipwrecks of the voyage of life and have committed physical acts of crime.

Society must be protected from the criminals. Yet some crimes are purely symptoms of mental maladies with which the poor mortals are suffering. Too often we view crime from one angle only. We compel the unfortunate insane and feeble-minded, who find their way into our courts, to undergo the same punishments as we do the mentally sound. Often retributive, hasty justice overtakes these benighted offenders; in less than an half an hour they are found guilty, sentenced and carried off to prison.

In one of the wards in this prison was a young man

swaying to and fro, soliloquizing in a silly, senseless chatter. His hands tremble continually, his eyes are lustreless.

He is unconscious of the approach of the visitors. This fellow was convicted of forgery. He clumsily raised a check from fifteen to one hundred and fifty dollars; then asked the cashier of the bank if he had done it properly.—

Helpless and demented he had been stigmatized and penalized, his family disgraced; and, to the sorrow of disease, had been added the degradation of crime.

Another individual is decorated with bits of colored paper. He carries a sack full of all sorts of trash, pebbles, leaves and bits of wood. He, too, is possessed of weak features which have been scarred and bruised by the demon of epilepsy. Following each convulsion he becomes an unconscious slave and tool of his baser self. In a state of automatism he appropriated some garments from a clothes lines, and before he regained his normal consciousness he was caught. Result, — again swift, relentless justice stepped in, and society was avenged; the culprit sent to prison.

Another patient may be found delivering an incoherent speech to an imaginary audience. He belongs to the type that murder our public men. Fate dealing more kindly with them, they sometimes become leaders of fanatical religious cults. This particular fellow has very keen eyes; his face is irregular in outline. Nature has stamped upon him marks of degeneracy, and criminality has claimed him for her

own. He murdered a fellowman because the latter refused to acknowledge him as an emissary from God. He is a paranoiac. —

Such was the company in which Jere was to live from now on. A living tomb, from whence there is no resurrection!

Taking up the thread of our narrative we are apprised of a startling fact. The prison physician made, as he asserted he would at the time of Jere's examination, some inquiry as to his progenitors; he discovered that Jere Patton, whose real name was Jere Patton Maxon, was none other than the grandson of the distinguished Judge Maxon, who had sentenced him to prison. It became the distressing duty of the doctor to write to the Judge regarding the matter. For two reasons: namely, he knew of the Judge's former efforts to discover the whereabouts of his son, whom he had disinherited; and, though the truth was brutal, the physician felt morally bound to inform Judge Maxon of his investigations. Then, too, it was necessary to verify the findings that the records of the court might be accurate concerning the identity of the young man. The letter written to Judge Maxon read as follows:

STATE PRISON,
Office of Physician.

Hon. Steven Maxon,
Judge Circuit Court,
City of X——.

My dear Judge Maxon:

It is with deepest regret that I write you the following lines. When examining a young prisoner the

other day it developed that the fellow knew little of his antecedents. Looking up the State's vital records it was found that the prisoner's name in reality is Jere Patton Maxon. Further investigations revealed that he is a child of your late son, Steven Maxon, Jr.

Believe me, Judge, that never have I been placed in a more painful position than to be compelled to impart this lamentable news to you. When I examined the boy in my laboratory I found him to be both insane and feeble-minded. This mental infirmity being due to an inherited blood disorder. I have placed him in the Hospital for Insane Criminals, where he will receive the best care and attention that I am able to give. The prognosis for recovery is unfavorable.

You may rest assured that this revelation will be kept strictly confidential.

Yours sympathizingly,

E. B. RANSON, M.D.

Physician in Charge State Prison Hospital.

CHAPTER XV

A PAWN OF FATE

Upon receiving the letter containing the shocking disclosures, written by the prison physician, Judge Maxon left the city the following day. Another judge was appointed to fill the bench during the absence of the venerable jurist. It was stated in the court house circles that he would be absent a week on a visit to the state capital. Political gossip ran riot and all kinds of wild surmises were disseminated. Some rumors would have it that the Judge was going to interview the Governor concerning a successor; Kennington quite likely being the favorite; others asserted that Judge Maxon was seeking some higher position for himself. Each, however, fell wide of the mark, for the visit to the capital was made to corroborate the statement received from Dr. Ranson.

A week had elapsed, when, one evening, Kennington, learning of the Judge's return, called upon his legal friend. Entering the library, into which he had been ushered, he found Judge Maxon sitting before the open fireplace, lost in deep reverie. His head was bowed upon his chest; in his hand, resting upon the broad arm of his chair, was a crumpled sheet of paper. Impishly the firelight illumined his face and snow white hair. He was totally oblivious to all his surroundings, even to Kennington's approach.

The latter thought to himself as he gazed at the old man: "Here is a beautiful picture of kindly old age, peace and serenity;" and he hesitated to disturb the old gentleman, when the servant spoke: "Mr. Kennington to see you, Judge."

The Judge was startled from his contemplation, but welcomed his visitor quite warmly and in his customary hospitable manner.

"I am indeed glad that you called; I have been wanting to talk to you all day."

"Yes, Judge, it is a pleasure to have you speak that way, I assure you, but first let me ask, are you ill?"

Whereupon the other replied: "No, not in body, but in mind. Draw your chair to the fire and read this letter. I do not know how to begin."

Kennington divined that something must have gone radically wrong with his aged friend and solicitously said: "Better let me call a physician;" to which the Judge made a deprecatory gesture and replied:

"No, no; a physician could not render any service to me in this case," and in a tone of utter despair he again proffered the letter to the young man for perusal. Kennington answered, "Since you insist that no physical attention is needed I'll do as you wish;" and so saying sat down to read the missive, laden with its tragic news. After the reading Kennington was speechless; a sigh from the Judge roused him. Rising he stepped over to the bowed form opposite him and tenderly laid his hands upon the shoulders of the grief-stricken man.

"All right, my boy; don't say anything; sit down; let me do the talking. Fate has laid a heavy hand on that poor lad Jere Patton, whom I sentenced to prison a little more than two weeks ago. The truth is, however, that I sentenced him beyond the pale of pardon fifty years ago."

"What do you mean?" the astonished young lawyer exclaimed, thinking to himself that perhaps his friend's mind had suddenly become unbalanced under the stress of this terrible revelation.

"Have patience with me, Kennington. It is a long story but it must be all told, and told without reserve so that you may understand the moves Fate makes when she plays with men, — her pawns on the chess board of life."

There was a moment of silence, and then the Judge began in a low voice:

"The curriculum of 18— had come to its close and an eastern university was ready to open its ivy clad portals to let her graduates go out into the world to put into practice what they had acquired in theory.

"The great hall was crowded to overflowing, and with bated breath the audience listened to the baccalaureate address delivered by the oldest living alumnus, the Rev. A. J. Goodall, Doctor of Divinity.

"Among the terse statements made by the noted divine, one especially was dwelt and enlarged upon: namely, that every one is the architect of his own fortune. It is needless to say that many firm resolutions were made on that evening to blaze a pathway in the labyrinth of life, leaving a record in the annals

of history as a proof of the assertions of the well-loved speaker. The next evening the united fraternities gave their farewell dance to the sororities, and it was an event long to remain a bright spot in the memory of those attending. Nothing was spared or overlooked to make the occasion a most brilliant success; for the youths arranging the program were sons of wealthy and noted families.

The galaxy of beauty displayed by the members of the sororities could only be rivalled by the imagination of an artist. One certain couple attracted the attention of every eye. They were beyond doubt the most favored among all those present, physically, intellectually and socially. The young man had just finished his literary course, winning nearly all the available scholarships and honors until he was recognized as the finest student of the university and pointed out as a model to be followed. He was a very diligent scholar, endowed with a high sense of honor and his position in life was above reproach, but in his life a Nemesis was ever present.

"Dark visions rose to cloud his happiness when he recalled the hours spent with reckless companions on a night during his sophomore year. A Greek fraternity, of which he was a member, had given a reception to visiting brothers from a neighboring university. Wine had flowed in profusion and in the early hours of the morning one foolish *frater* had suggested that they visit the Maison D'or, a place often frequented by the young bloods of the day. Here, drunk and worshiping at the shrine of an unchaste Venus, he contracted a loathsome disease.

“At heart he was a clean boy and when the truth was brought home to him a few days later his mental depression almost amounted to a despair which invited suicide.

“Upon saner reflection, however, he consulted a prominent college physician and learned that though his body was filled with the revolting poison of a constitutional disease, he might by a long continued, rigid treatment, eventually be restored to health. Faithfully he followed the strict rules which the doctor imposed upon him; and yet, though his progress was excellent, he was always haunted by a constant fear that some time or other a second outbreak would drag him down to utter ruin.

“Fate, however, seemed to be kind; he steadily improved and soon appeared his former self again. Then love came, and though at first he fought hard against it, ever mindful of his secret downfall and its bitter consequences, he finally surrendered to the all-conqueror when assured by his physician that if he continued to live a sober life there would be no danger either for himself or his wife, were he to marry. With a light heart he hastened to declare his love and received her sweetly candid avowal of love requited. Those were halcyon days of happiness supreme, though often the phantom spectre of fear infernal filled his heart and mind, and the burning question recurred to haunt him: what if, notwithstanding the doctor's assurance of immunity, this curse of humanity, this retributing sin of the fathers visited upon the children's children, should assert itself, and on *his son*?

“The engagement of the young couple was approved by every one, especially the families of the betrothed. The fraternity dance was their last social appearance at college prior to leaving for home, and quite naturally they sought to be in each other’s company as much as possible that evening. She was an excellent young lady of strictly irreproachable character, and he was her first love. She lavished freely upon him all the ardor, fervor and true passion that her heart was capable of giving.

“As I said before, the dance was all that could be expected of a college affair. There were quiet nooks in secluded spots where between dances the lovers could give themselves over to wanton abandonment of expressions of affection. Then followed the supper, its fine, fiery wines adding their fuel to the flames.”

Here the narrator stopped for a moment, and then resumed as if talking to himself only.

“It was after midnight when the lovers started for home; and instead of leaving his betrothed at her door, the enamoured youth followed into the house to remain — ‘just a little while’ — as he consoled his voice of conscience. His resolve of ‘only a little while’ was supplanted by the wild desire to remain, to possess what was really his own, only withheld by stupid laws of convention. The prehistoric incident of the eating of the forbidden fruit was repeated; and, like the first man and woman, ‘they were sore afraid.’

“The trip to their home town was bereft of the charm it otherwise would have held for them; the

constant consciousness of having been weighed and found wanting, having been less strong than their passions, was a never ending source of worry to them. It was doubled for him, as he still dreaded a possible consequence of his secret debauch of several years before.

“Early in the fall their little world read in the morning papers the announcement of their clandestine marriage in New York. Shortly after the Christmas holidays the many friends of the young couple were shocked to learn that the constant strain of social duties, combined with church work, for they were ardent church workers, had undermined the young wife’s constitution to such an extent that absolute rest and solitude were ordered by her family physician. The real purpose of this exile was simply to forestall any comments upon the prematurely pending accouchement.

“The happiness of the anticipated event was clouded by the ever-present painful thoughts of the parents to be; the mother continuously brooding over the shame of their illicit act, and the father incessantly worried lest the child should be born with a diseased inheritance with all its dread potentialities. And the knowledge of his sin hung over his happiness by the thread of its uncertainty as did the sword of Damocles. When the time came and a son was born to them, the young father could hardly wait to draw the attending physician aside and falteringly inquire if the little one was normal in every way, a question that was assuringly answered by the doctor. He was much relieved and in the happi-

ness over the presence of the little household tyrant the young parents were gradually forgetting their folly and the imprudence of an unguarded moment."

The old Judge halted; and, looking straight at Kennington said: "You, no doubt, have guessed before this who the person is that I have described; if not, I'll tell you, — I am the man!"

Silently Kennington accepted this self-accusation, only gravely nodding his head in response.

Judge Maxon continued: "Success attended my efforts; and, as the years rolled by, I became a Judge on the bench. The irony of it, that I should be called a Judge to pass sentence on others! And to atone for the sins of my youth I have endeavored to live a straight, clean, upright life. I even earned the praise and acknowledgment of the public; and now this terrible revelation; though kept long secret, my sin has found me out. But to resume, I often was depressed by the fear that after all, my son Tracy might be infected with the same horrid disease which once tainted my blood. This worry was a constant threat to my happiness, curtailing my keenest enjoyments, and dimming my pleasures.

Unfortunately my sorrowful anticipations were realized. Tracy was utterly shiftless, would not apply himself in school, and finally, growing unruly and incorrigible, was expelled. I then placed him in a military institution, thinking that the strict discipline would have a salutary effect; but in vain. From here he was also dismissed in disgrace. I then tried to interest him in the study of law in my office, and for a while he seemed to do well; but again my

hopes were dashed to the ground. He was a fine looking young man, but extremely selfish, precocious, morally anesthetic, inwardly coarse, devoid of pure and noble ideas and ideals. His next escapade was a runaway marriage consummated with a ballet girl, a Lucille Patton of the "Vanity Fair Chorus," for which act, in resentment, I unjustly disinherited him.

"He passed from my life as though he were dead. I never saw or heard of him again, — until this fateful letter came to my hands. I immediately resolved to verify or disprove the statement made herein and thus left the city, as you know, telling no one of the purport of my sudden trip. But it is only too true; that unfortunate puppet of fate, Jere, is, in fact, my grandson. From my investigations I learned that as can easily be imagined the wedded life of my son was an exceedingly stormy one; little wonder, however, for two windstorms leashed together will produce a cyclone, and "two hard stones will not grind smoothly."

"An unwelcome visitor in the person of a son came to them, an accident, as it were, of their unbridled passion; and, rather than adding a sense of responsibility to the parents, the child was left to the care of an illiterate nurse girl of the street, while the parents indulged in a mad pursuit of pleasure. The child surely was to be pitied, for he bore a heavy burden of ancestral tyranny which is always relentless and which handicapped him forever. His fate was predestined, — his course on life's seas chartered. The world, myself included, has judged him

harshly; it was not his fault that he entered life warped, — mentally and physically.

“Tracy soon tiring of them, forsook his wife and child; then his money gave out and he resorted to forgery. He was caught, tried and sentenced to prison. When released he went from bad to worse. The end was suicide. Jere’s mother though far from what she should have been, had sufficient of the instinct of mother love within her to cling to her child and she eked out a questionable living for herself and for him.

“When Jere was but eight years old she became a victim to tuberculosis and died in a public institution. Here is where the information concerning the boy stops; how he grew up, what hardships he was compelled to undergo Heaven alone knows; and yet it is all my fault, all my fault! Just to think that I should finish the tragedy I began, and sentence him to a living grave in prison, where after a thorough examination it has been found advisable for the good of himself and society at large to transfer him to the Colony of Insane Criminals, there among other human derelicts to spend the rest of his life!

“Oh, Kennington, was there ever a case like this? Before you came, my dear young friend, I sat here and let my life pass before me like a panorama, omitting not the smallest instance. Like a hollow mockery from the deep caverns of time the words of that well-remembered baccalaureate address rang through my mind: ‘Every one is the architect of his own fortune!’ I tell you it is false! It is false! ’Tis an abominable lie; what can frail man, the mere

pawn of fate, a miserable puppet, do to alter the prescribed course of his destinies? Why in the very morning of earth's existence, at the gates of Eden, from whence Adam and Eve were driven for sinning against God's command, the law of heredity was irrevocably established when the progenitors of mankind were doomed to labor, to love, to suffer and to die. Few natures are strong enough to mould fate against the odds of heredity."

Waiting a few brief moments the Judge again spoke:

"How could I and mine ever dare hope to escape that inexorable tentacle of fatality? I now see that many times in my professional experience I have had ample proof of the consequences of heredity; many unfortunates have been brought before me upon whom to pass judgment for transgressions which were in reality attributable to their ancestors then lying in the grave. Defective in mind and body, how could such victims rise above the fateful level of their inheritance? The inmates of various institutions of the country are living testimonials to the law of heredity, and man's inhumanity to man is forever flagrantly in evidence. I, myself, have been more than unkind to my son and grandson. The poisons of my own blood have wreaked vengeance on them.

"The pulpit, which should be the beacon light of virtue and the warning voice against evil, is afraid to fulfill its mission, lest it offend its substantial supporters. Prominent members of the church rent their properties for immoral purposes; parents take

their children budding into manhood and womanhood to the theatre to view plays which would cause even a lascivious Nero to blush. Under the guise of respectability dances are given and garments worn which are worthy of the dancing daughter of Herodias.

“What the world needs is a physical gospel preached without fear or favor. Man should be taught to lead a sober life, near nature’s heart; and the greatest care should be given to the production and bringing up of a healthy, morally clean race. All those unfit for the propagation of healthy offspring should be unsexed or forbidden to marry, thereby making it impossible for children to be born and reared in fetters of direful bondage, the links of which had been forged by polluted ancestors. Oh, how much better had it been, had I never been a father!” —

Exhausted from this sad self-accusatory autobiography, the old Judge leaned back heavily in his chair and closed his eyes. A prolonged silence ensued.

Kennington was so moved by the dramatic recital that words failed him for expression. While reviewing the statements made by his venerable colleague, he became conscious of the regular, heavy breathing of the Judge beside him. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* came to his mind. Here sat the last of the Maxon family; and to what an inglorious end it had come!—

Nature was kind, however, to let the old man graciously fall into the arms of sleep.

Quietly Kennington arose, and, as the little tongues

of flames, the only light in the room, fantastically flickered and cast their weird shadows upon the walls, he softly stole out of the library, and leaving the Judge to the faithful servant's care, went home.

CHAPTER XVI

KENNINGTON'S REWARD

One year had elapsed and brought with it quite a few momentous changes. The vigorous campaign against public graft, inaugurated and pursued by Kennington, had come to a glorious and victorious end. All the evil doers in public office who had remained in the city were dealt with summarily and others who fled, ere they could be apprehended, left never to return. A thorough house-cleaning, as it were, had been made and the City of the Lake enjoyed an administration of civic purity. It was no longer the haven of refuge for criminals. Human life was safer, as was public and private property. All this was due to the persistent, fearless efforts of the prosecuting attorney, whom the evil element had selected and elected, thereby sealing its own doom. Only too late did the political gangsters learn their mistake.

The press, the pulpit, the various organizations and clubs, as well as the members of the many homes, all combined in extolling Kennington's virtues. Little wonder it was, then, that when at the end of the last court session Judge Maxon resigned, the lionized prosecuting attorney was suggested as the successor to his venerable colleague.

With some trepidation Judge Kennington took

his seat on the bench, feeling that he might not fill this highly responsible position creditably (that is, according to his advanced ideas of criminality), and deal out justice as he thought it should be dispensed. In his wide experience with crime, as prosecutor, he had come to the painful realization that much was lacking in the manner with which the criminal is treated and disposed of. He had become fully convinced that the old retaliative, vindictive dispensation of the law was not the kind to be pursued in this present era. He believed the man, not the crime alone, must be thoroughly studied; that Science and Mercy must be the associate Judges, seated on either side of Justice. Science was first to be employed to investigate the physical basis of the social phenomenon of crime, and the concomitant, economic or social circumstances which make the individual a criminal. And then Mercy was to follow, pleading in the name of humanity to let the true findings of her associate sister Judge, Science, stay the hand of Justice, lest the blow of the avenging sword fall too heavily and cut too deeply and severely.

For almost a year Judge Kennington was a frequent but welcomed visitor at the Gerard residence. To him these hours were delicious rest periods from his strenuous mental labors for he was very conscientious in his new legal capacity.

There was ever present in his mind the sad history Judge Maxon had related to him; and, which was known but to the old gentleman, the prison physician and Kennington himself. It was through the young Judge's recommendation and vigorous efforts that a

psychopathic laboratory was established in the Court. Here each offender of the law was given a thorough examination at the time of his trial, thereby preventing the miscarriage of justice. It was his delight to discuss these matters and the great plans he had in mind for the penology of the future, with the girl he loved so dearly. Her clever and clear conception of all these vital topics and her great interest in the work itself, convinced him all the more that she would be a fit helpmate for him. Often Kennington indulged in day dreams of what it would mean to him to come home at evening to her, as his wife, and there at his own fireside review the questions of the day. Equally as often after such fond reveries he firmly resolved to speak to her of his love, but each time it appeared as if he could not muster up courage to do so. Naturally, with her feminine instinct, Jennie divined the secret thought and desire of her admirer; yet not infrequently would she direct the conversation into other channels when she saw that there was danger of the subject becoming too personal. They were conscious lovers; yet no declaration of love had been made.

On the evening of his first year's anniversary as Judge, Kennington called at the Gerard's. The weather was ideal, as only the autumn season can be. October had been simply gorgeous, striving to leave no doubt in the minds of the people, that the autumn time, with its wonderful sunshine, its myriads of color effects in gold, brown and red, is the queen of seasons, and triumphantly ushering out the harvest time of the year.

A beautiful Indian Summer night was holding sway; and it was upon Jennie's own suggestion that they set out for a stroll in the park along the Lake shore.

Seated there, with the wide expanse of water before them, watching the thousands of frolicking white-caps, silver-tinted by the serene and mellow light of the harvest moon, Kennington and Jennie sat in rapturous silence. Once in a while, in the distance, black clouds of smoke would arise from huge funnels, bright lights became visible, deep-toned, sonorous sounds floated over the blue main and the silence again.

"The ships that pass in the night!" Jennie remarked.

"Yes, it is a wonderful sight, and yet a sad one; for it illustrates how on life's sea the human vessels, — man meeting man — pass and go on, never perhaps to meet again!"

"You are not in a sad mood tonight, Judge, I hope?" Jennie queried, looking him full in the face, her own fair countenance bearing an undisguisable expression of concern.

"Oh, no, Jennie, I only gave vent to my thoughts which the grand tableau of a few moments ago had called into life. No, I am not sad; why should I be? Fate has been extremely kind to me; I have been permitted today to conclude my first anniversary as an incumbent of the bench. Taking a retrospect, I find that it has been an exceedingly successful year. Science linked hand in hand with Justice, the latter tempered by Mercy, have broadened the

penology of today and the old Lex Talionis has been pushed into the background. You have given me inspiration and been a great help to me when I came to you with my legal troubles. No doubt many times I've wearied you with my abstract monologues."

"Why, no indeed; you never were tiresome, and I was not only glad that you considered me capable of comprehending your statements, but I too have profited. They gave me broader views in my settlement labors, especially since I had fallen heir to some of the houses in which I had been pursuing my social betterment work. I have closely followed the decisions in your court and new ideas of life have been given me. You say I have been helpful to you; I can hardly believe it; I do not see in what measure, but I am sure that you have been of far more help to me in the past year than I could ever dream to have been to you. No, do not interrupt me," as he turned toward her to speak, "please, don't; I must tell you this, for it is only due you in atonement of what you suffered a little more than a year ago. It is far from my intention to call up every detail of the dead past with its dead; but, Judge, I know all you had to contend with in your brave fight for the city's reform. I know every one of your opponents, and," — in a low voice, partly shaken with emotion, — "I know who sought to stop your efforts by endeavoring to silence you forever. How I found that out does not matter now; perhaps some other time I will disclose it to you; tonight, however, I wanted to tell you, in order that you might understand my attitude in the matter and how I appre-

ciated, beyond expression, your courtesy, notwithstanding the odds against me."

Kennington gently sought her hand, which she unresistingly yielded to him. He held it for a while in silence and then began:

"Little did I realize or anticipate that you would reveal this to me; but as you say, let the dead past bury its dead. Today is the time in which we live and the Future is knocking at our door, Jennie," he said tenderly, "I love you; I need you; I need your help. Will you assist me to solve life's many problems, that thereby we two may jointly, governed and guided by the greatest virtues of all, true, unfaltering love, and united in happiness, be a blessing to our fellowmen, accomplishing something worthwhile for the good of humanity?"

With sweet frankness, born of her true individual character and self, she replied, laying both her hands in his, and looking at him with eyes overflowing with tender love:

"Yes, Arthur, I will help you always, for I love you!"

When heart talks to heart in the language of love words are insufficient and unnecessary. Thus in the happy consciousness of each other's devotion they remained in silence, — a song of happiness in their hearts.

Farther down the lake shore a boat was majestically steaming up to the pier, having successfully completed her voyage.

"Home at last! Safely anchored, dearest," Kennington whispered. "We too have reached the harbor, — the harbor of love!"

EPILOGUE

Several years have gone by. Kennington has become the Chief Justice of the Municipal Court of the City of the Lake. This honor came to him as a reward for his honest, meritorious service to the people. His reputation has become nation wide. He has become the pioneer of scientific social justice. It became evident to his keen, critical mind that for years there had been gross miscarriage of justice in the treatment of prisoners, and because of these failures of jurisprudence, society was likewise inefficiently protected from those who violated the laws. This defective legal procedure had, for years, sent hundreds of insane and feeble-minded persons to prison.

These same defective statutes unwisely released delinquent criminals, merely because they had served certain specified times in penal institutions, without taking into consideration whether or not the criminal had been cured of his anti-social disease.

Chief Justice Kennington was the father of the idea that every court in the land should have attached to it a psychopathic laboratory, where the mentality of criminals is investigated, where, in truth, all the factors that plotted against man for his downfall, are carefully studied. In the court over which he presided the facts of the violation of the

law were first carefully determined; then the report of the medical investigation was submitted to the judge before sentence was pronounced; except in those cases where the alleged criminal was so manifestly insane that he could not in the least comprehend that he was being tried. This information furnished the judge with the knowledge that would enable him to decide whether the individual should have a suspended sentence, be sent to prison, to a hospital for the insane, or placed in the hands of a probationary officer. At first a change in the methods of criminal procedure was met with a storm of protest from the legal fraternity. They argued that such a change was too idealistic and impracticable; they insisted that this plan would interfere with the functions of the jury, and that the right of the defendant to employ witnesses would be curtailed; and these objections seemed at first to be valid and logical. But finally wisdom prevailed.

This great reform gradually spread over the land. The courts of the big cities recognized the value of this judicial reformation, and established similar laboratories. The prisons heard the call. Great changes were being worked out in their administration. The political grafters who had so long held sway were sent about their business, and scientific men were put in their stead. The prisons became schools for the training of the hand, head and heart; they became hospitals also, where all remedial surgical and medical defects were taken care of; where prisoners were freed, if possible, of their mental and physical burdens; while those who were found to be

incurably defective, no matter what their crimes might be, great or small, were kept in permanent custodial care for their own benefit, and the welfare of society.

THE END



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